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HIS STRANGE TASK

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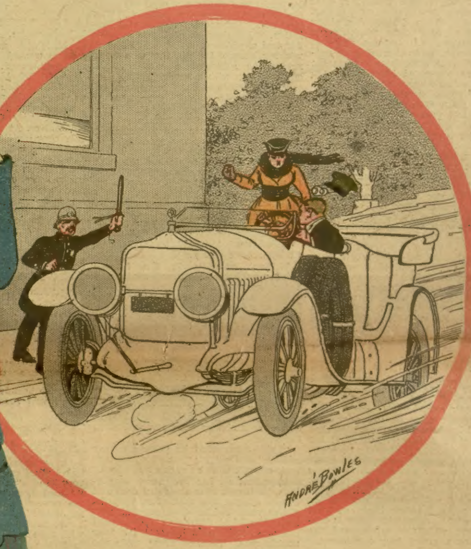
When Fate Sat at the Wheel

By Mason Ray



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CHAPTER I.

JACK STAFFORD, auto-tester for Zolla and Gates, bent over the steering wheel, while the breeze of his mad flight fanned his straw-tinted hair in wild wisps, and his sea-blue eyes glinted with delight as he whirred along the road like the incarnate spirit of motion. "My kingdom for a car!" he feelingly misquoted. "Lord, to be trying out motors for the idle rich! What a mockery!" Sudden revolt against empty pockets gripped him. In sudden protest he increased his daredevil speed. The long, low car that was half engine darted forward along the country pike like a gray meteor. Presently the road narrowed between rail fences where ill-tilled farms bordered the way. At a sharp turn his horn loudly bleated warning, but too late. A top-heavy load of straw loomed in the way, and a terrified farm team settled to their haunches, reared, and plunged. At the right were woods with a bisecting road he could not reach, otherwise the course of his life like the timber trail would have led thru monotonous shadows.

"Devil's luck!" he gasped, and without a pause, rode down the fence at the left as if its moss-grown poles were gossamer webs. Thru a grain field he plowed a crescent, then crashed over rotting rails into the highway.

"Good old girl!" he praised the motor. "Fine old dame!"

Giving the machine full gas, he darted across the landscape as if pursued by demons. The madness of swift flight fired his blood. On and on he slipped thru space, whirled about bends with horns bellowing, shot along the level, unobscured pike, swerving for startled teams; and, at last the speed-crazed driver came to his senses and realized that his usual test route was fully a hundred miles to the rear. In short, Jack Stafford, penniless tryer-out of motor engines, had virtually eloped with his beloved machine.

"Now we'll hike for the hills," he decided. "We'll be off for a fling, and after that—the deluge."

Forward he sped. Since he had crossed the Rubicon he'd see what was beyond. Not a tire punctured. The carburetor was all right. Nothing gave pause to his flight. He ascended a succession of hills that seemed emerald steps to heaven.

"Almost at the stars," he chuckled and consulted his stem-winder. It indicated noon. He was hungry; so he eagerly watched for something that looked like an eating-house and soon slowed up at a roadside inn.

"I'd like some trout from yon stream, a fowl, strong coffee, and the usual accompaniments," he ordered of the round-eyed landlord.

"You'll have fish when you snare 'em," hinted the boniface, with a grin, "but a fowl with vegetables will be served at once." Sharply eying his guest, he indicated an armchair by a window that overlooked the unbroken forest opposite, then disappeared kitchenward.

"What the mischief is he bug-eyed at?" Jack asked himself. He rose and inspected his Norse-fair, blue-eyed visage in a sideboard mirror, thinking it smeared with car-lubricant; but his face was clean, fresh-shaved and strongly handsome. Since he discovered no disfiguring smudge, he thrust his hand into a side pocket and found three coins. "Maybe he thinks I lack the price," was his conclusion, "and, by Gee, he's pretty near right."

While waiting he idly glanced about the room. It had blue walls that were forbiddingly cool for early spring. There was the huge sideboard, a silver water-cooler and four white-draped tables. On one of these a previous diner had carelessly discarded an outspread daily. It offered entertainment; so Stafford possessed himself of the stray sheet and became absorbed in the European situation and a new phase of the Mexican disturbance.

"Those fool greasers eat too much cayenne and garlic," he mused. "Makes 'em bad-tempered."

He turned the page. It was embellished by a cut of a much-wanted murderer. The reproduced likeness showed a frank, fine-looking face surmounted by a high-rolled pompadour of fair hair and heavily veiled, dreamy eyes described as blue.

"That chap," he recognized, "is the millionaire fugitive, Paul Westveer."

Newspapers had made the man's face and crime familiar. Without reading the revived story he could recall every detail. Westveer and his cousin and victim, Norton Seydel, owned hunting lodges in the north Wisconsin woods—the very forest thru which he was driving the borrowed car. Both men courted Miss Adora McKee, the spirited daugher of a country physician. She became engaged to Westveer, supposedly because of his wealth. At least Seydel claimed this to be true. He, despite his lodge and leisure, lived largely by his wits. Guests at the lodges testified to a bitter quarrel between the cousins just before a hunt. That afternoon one of their number discovered Seydel's body far back on the deer run. His dark, handsome face had been shot away as if by diabolic intent; but his glossy black hair, his clothing, jewelry, and private papers were sufficient proof of his identity. To and from the body were a number of tracks. Among these were three plain imprints that corresponded, nail for nail and line for line, with the hunting boots of Paul Westveer. A coroner's inquest connected him with the crime, and the findings of a grand jury corroborated this decision.

But Westveer had disappeared. Police dragnets included every probable hiding-place in both Europe—despite the war—and the Americas, without result. Africa and the East received attention by detectives whose prestige tottered. And now an increased reward for the capture of the world's most talked of criminal stared at the reader from shrieking headlines.

"Shades of Hamlet!" mused Stafford. "If luck dropped that plum my side the fence I'd buy his nib's sixty-horse road-eater!"

To own a car was his young ambition. He was car mad. His motor mania struck into his very being. But to save the essential thousands from a sixty-dollar wage was spooning up the sea. His exalted taste in racing models excluded him from ownership. Therefore he enjoyed the next best by trying out car power for the speed-mad sons of wealthy men.

With appetite razored by hours at the wheel, he hungrily ate his fowl and vegetables, his bread and doughnuts, and dessert of pudding. And while he generously dined the corpulent landlord eyed him from a distance with intent, unwinking gaze. So fixed and curious was his stare that his guest felt its surveillance and chafed at its insolence. The dinner ended. He paid his indebtedness from two of his silver dollars, and then purchased gasoline with his fifty cents change and the third coin. With what he would buy food and oil during the home trip he neither knew nor cared. He had borrowed a car, but he was not borrowing trouble.

Once more he was off, and this time amidst dense timber that seemed to block the narrow woods road, but always miraculously opened to permit him passage. Overhead the sky now lowered, and thunder grumbled along the darkening heavens. He feared a spring freshet, but it was too late to turn back even if he possessed the price of a lodging. Instead, he darted forward until huge drops fell spat, spat, on the hood, and the ominous silence changed to the monotonous roar of down-rushing water. While he raised the top a blinding flood sang thru the forest.

He drove on until he reached a place where the road forked to right and left. At first speed he investigated the right track, hoping for shelter. He knew that the great, stream-traversed forest held many cottages of summer residents. He believed the narrowing road led to one of these, and tho the season was yet too bleak for tourists he might find an open shed. About him darkened a premature twilight. The spot seemed uncanny in its dismal isolation. He thought of Seydel's murder and shuddered. As he was heartily wishing himself back in the open farm region, he glimpsed a stoutly built cabin of logs with a rustic porch.

"Tourist cabin closed for winter," he judged. "Anyhow, here's a roof."

He circled the building to an open shed. It had sometime been a sort of garage. He drove in and immediately groomed down his gray machine that was half engine and the pride of his heart. This done, he dashed thru the downpour to the rear door of the lodge. It might offer unlocked hospitality. Thick-growing sumac hid it from view until he was almost at its portal. To his amazement it was not only unbarred, but stood wide open, revealing within a scene of wild disorder.

"Shades of Shiloh!" he ejaculated. "What's been doing?"

Without pausing in the littered kitchen with its overturned chairs and table, he crossed a raftered room containing a dining table, chairs and a built-in sideboard to a square hall. With a glance at deer-horn wall pieces of enormous reach, he mounted stairs built of half-logs to a landing where doors opened in front and at right and left. For a moment he stood irresolute, then investigated each in turn, beginning at the right. The first and second were furnished rooms of double size, but when he stood before the third door his dilated eyes noted a dull stain at the threshold that led back down the stairway until it was lost in the gloom.

"This storm must be getting on my nerves," he thought; "but I'd swear that trail of spilt wine or coffee was blood."

Impatient at his grewsome imaginings, he thrust open the third door and beheld a sight that made him gasp. On a disheveled bed lay an apparently dead man. Blood had dried on his disordered garments and had dripped to the floor at his side. Stafford drew aside the coat and felt the heart. It feebly pulsed under his trembling fingers. With a towel sopped in the nearby ewer he bathed the marble-white countenance. And as he bathed the face or chafed the cold hands he noted that the wounded cottager had up-combed hair fair as pulled candy and a heavy mustache of the same hue. His hands were not those of a laborer, yet had largeness and strength. His clothing was of the best. His height equaled Stafford's own generous two yards, with weight to match. Even in his extremity he looked every inch an athlete. What was more, he might have sat for the portrait Stafford saw at the inn. In short, he was amazingly like the newspaper cut of Paul Westveer!

"I'm a doddering fool to think it," mused the car-tester. "Since I read that reward article my wits are addled like a half-hatched egg."

He wondered if any person lurked in the vicinity. Tense with anxiety lest the man die under his awkward ministrations, he caught up the ewer and spilled its chilled contents over the white face and bared chest. The rough treatment was rewarded. Deep blue eyes slowly flickered open and wonderingly stared.

"Who are you?" demanded the pale lips.

Stafford explained his presence.

"Fetch me some brandy," ordered the sufferer and again swooned.

Brandy! Where in all that wilderness could one procure liquors? He carried nothing with him. His business required a clear head and muscles of steel. Then he thought of the built-in buffet below. At a run he visited the spot and discovered a half-filled decanter of amber fluid. Back at the bedside he poured a quantity of this between the set teeth of his patient. The deep blue eyes again trembled open, and this time they steadily regarded him.

"Do you know who I am?" asked the wounded man, in a stronger voice.

Stafford was impelled to an astonishing statement. "I think you're Paul Westveer," said he.

"Yes, and dying," added the other.

"Who knifed you?" questioned Stafford. He believed the fugitive had battled with hounding detectives. Why they had permitted their prey to escape was a mystery.

"You won't believe me," said the dying man. "You'll think I'm delirious. But I'm perfectly sane and this is the truth: I was stabbed early this morning by, Norton Seydel, my supposed victim and my nearest of kin!"

CHAPTER II.

AS WESTVEER made this astounding statement, Stafford stared down at him with unbelieving eyes. His face expressed incredulity. Of course the man raved. Stabbed by Norton Seydel! What rot! Stabbed by the man he'd killed out by the deer runway!

"I stated a fact," insisted the dying fugitive. "My Cousin Norton is very much alive. At this moment he is probably showing himself in the open since he thinks me dead. You know the story of my supposed crime. You know about the mutilated hunter." He was talking quickly, eagerly, as if to cover as much ground as possible while he lived. As Stafford nodded he went on without pause. "That disfigured corpse was some poor chap shot by accident. I was probably the first to find him, and started out of the woods to summon aid. While I was gone Seydel happened to discover the man and my tracks. His devilishly alert mind conceived a fiendish plot, and it was simple. "That's where came its astonishing power of mischief. All he had to do was easy. He changed outer garments with the corpse, who had hair the color of his. On its hand he slipped his ring. In the pockets he left his watch and papers. Then he sneaked from the country."

Westveer's strength ebbed with his words. Again and again Stafford plied him with brandy that he might proceed. Belief was growing in his prejudiced mind. And as it grew indignation mounted. "You see? After our quarrel he could throw suspicion my way. Opportunity gave him a dead hunter imaged like himself. They must have been as physically alike as"—he hesitated, then saw a fit comparison at his very hand—"as you and I," he finished.

"Good Lord, what a fiend!" exclaimed the car-tester. "What a sharp, scheming devil!"

"At first," said the wounded man, with eyes brightening as he saw Stafford's face express interest, "he couldn't know how well he'd planned. It was an impulsive trick intended to make me trouble."

"And succeeded!" cried Stafford. He no longer doubted. His blue eyes flamed at the thought of Seydel's treachery. In crime annals it climaxed anything he'd ever read. With an arm beneath Westveer's head he administered brandy and bathed his face with the wet towel. Rage at the wrong done to the wounded one possessed him. He was determined to revive him that he might cheat the grave and his enemy. As his patient slightly gained he asked a question.

"Why," he demanded, "did your cousin attempt your life after making you an exile?"

"Because," said Westveer, "in order to keep me exiled, he, too, had to hide. We both tired of it. I wearied of being a hunted murderer, and he sickened of being the dead victim. Besides, he is legally my heir."

"Little good it'll do him," said Stafford. He was busied at examining the wound. "Maybe this isn't so bad," he urged. "Let me go for a doctor. The car——"

"The moment you remove the blood-soaked cloth I'll bleed to death," warned Westveer. "And if you go for a doctor I'll die alone while you're gone."

Stafford knew he was right. Nothing could be done. Consuming wrath at Seydel's foul deed filled his mind. His ingrained love of fair play revolted at the double crime. Compassionately he hung over the couch of one who was passing despite anything he could do. But he could give sympathy. He was glad chance brought him to the lodge. Westveer need not die without a friend. In his mind he called himself that. He had taken a fancy to the man beyond and outside of his dramatic history. He felt attracted. In life they would have been what the world calls congenial. Stafford felt they would have been men who understood each other without much speech. But now Westveer was talking. He was talking against time because death was imminent.

"I've been here since January," he told Stafford. "They say police look at home after foreign countries are exhausted. They expected me to travel. So when I read in the dailies of their movements I came here. I had to either hide or find Norton. I couldn't find him. So I came as near home as I dared. And he reasoned along the same lines. When he tired of the game he looked for me in the woods. I was cooking a meal. He might have shot me from the door, but I heard a sound and turned. I managed to throw up his gun. Then he knifed me and left me for dead, but I managed to crawl up here."

Once more the patient swooned and Stafford hastened downstairs to refill the emptied ewer with fresh water. There was a supply in the cookroom. When he had revived Westveer by its aid, he became aware that the sick man was intently studying him. So intent was his scrutiny that Stafford moved back a trifle, but the head turned and the eyes sought him as if their owner wished to carry that fair young Norse countenance to the world beyond. In them grew a strange light. It appeared like dawning hope, like triumph in the face of disaster.

"You and I are as similar in appearance as Norton and the unlucky sportsman," he again told Stafford. "We're not doubles, I'll grant that. But these so-called doubles are often quite different. If they came together no one would fancy a likeness. There was that case of the Australian who claimed an English estate. He didn't look any more like Tichbourne than King George resembles the Czar. Yet Tichbourne's mother insisted he was her son. It's suggestion and color and general make-up."

"Why does he babble of doubles?" wondered the listener. It seemed irreverent. But after resting and being plied with the brandy the wounded man still pursued the thought.

"Your eyes are a lighter blue than mine," he observed, "but eyes fade. Your lips are full, while mine are thin. A mustache would remedy that. Then if you combed that yellow hair straight back, not one in a thousand would guess the truth. Norton won his coup by duplicates. Why can't I?"

He studied this with brows drawn and eyes fixed. Presently he arranged what he had in mind and put it into speech.

"I am going to ask you a tremendous favor," said he.

"Ask anything you like," urged the car-tester.

"It would take you from home and friends."

"I have neither," said Stafford.

"Then," said the fugitive millionaire, "I want you to assume my personality and let me live out thru you the life Seydel destroyed. Don't interrupt," he begged. "Listen. Until you came my enemy was secure. After having me hounded as a murderer he deprives me of life itself. I can't prove that he is my slayer, nor can you. He is free to claim my estate, to marry the woman I love. He'll clear my name, but he'll reap the harvest. The thought is torture. Losing my life is nothing compared to the bitterness of knowing my murderer will possess my home and degrade the woman I was to marry. To prevent this I'd gladly pay over to you every dollar I own. Will you help me? My God, Stafford! You can't refuse!"

The car-tester looked deep into Westveer's pleading eyes. He knew the dying man begged something worth more than life or wealth. His own heart burned with hatred of the slayer who was free. The plan was preposterous, but it was worth a trial. And it was worth the price. Nor could he refuse with Westveer's eyes probing his soul for a favorable reply. At least the unfortunate one should die happy if happiness depended only on his word.

"I'm willing," said he. "It's a tough proposition, but I hate skunks. And that Seydel's the worst one I ever struck."

Westveer reached for his companion's hand, while over his countenance settled infinite relief, the relaxation of absolute joy.

"My friend," he said, "my more than brother! Surely this is a good deed. It is justice instead of damnable wrong. You'll succeed. We'll plan for it. I'll outline all you need to know. I'll draw up a will and sign checks."

He directed Stafford to bring a pen and his bank books. Excitement lent him power to act. Form after form was signed ready for Stafford to fill. The characteristic, sprawling signature completed the brief document that was his gift of property. Neither of them knew that it was worth the paper on which it was written, but it might help if Stafford failed to personate his employer. But he wouldn't fail. They studied out his part. It was perfect in detail. Lastly the wounded man drew from his pocket a photograph mounted on gray with folders of the same.

"It's the girl I was to marry," said he. He gave the miniature to the man who was to represent him. "Save her from Seydel," he entreated. "I know you're a good man, and a good man would kill her rather than see her sacrificed. He appears well, but he's a beast. It's music that deceived her. He plays superbly. Music brought them together. When I complained she flew in a rage. Then I went to him. I told him to keep away. We quarreled. It was at the hunt. It provided the motive for his supposed murder." The speaker's voice trailed into silence. Stafford was looking at the miniature. He saw a saucy, piquant face framed in rebellious curls. It was the face of one ruled by impulse, but it was beautiful.

"Promise me by all you hold sacred," spoke the dying man, "that you'll protect her and see that I have justice. Swear it, comrade."

At that moment Stafford would have promised anything to give the dying one peace of mind.

"Your interests shall be my interests. What you desire will be my aim. I'm not saying much about the cash. You'd be welcome without that. Satisfaction at keeping Seydel on the run would repay me many times over, but it couldn't be done without money. So I'm accepting your trust exactly as it's offered. I'll do my part to the letter; rest assured of that." As Stafford gave his astounding promise Westveer's expression became one of supreme content. During the remaining hours he gave his mind to celestial affairs. By a small reading lamp Stafford read to him requested passages from a pocket Testament. Then came the end.

Several hours later Stafford, having constructed a rude casket and managed the lonely interment, was back of the steering wheel driving homeward. As he sped thru the rain-washed, sun-flooded forest, he wondered if he were actually the care-free, foot-free Jack Stafford of the previous day. Now that he had assumed the most stupendous task ever assigned to a mortal being, he envied his yesterday's poverty. Now he was pledged to renounce his own name and haphazard existence and become Westveer, the much wanted murderer whose victim was still in hiding. They had reasoned it all out. Seydel would lie low some time longer, then suddenly appear from abroad. He'd relate a plausible story of travels—and they'd be true. Meanwhile, if he, Stafford, successfully personated the millionaire, he was in hourly danger of arrest. Seydel, eagerly watching the papers, would read of his failure to kill, and be forced to remain "dead," or again attempt his cousin's murder. It was a ghastly mess. The whole business formed a hideous merry-go-round. But for two hindrances Stafford would have chucked the entire matter. First, he was inherently unable to go back on his given word; and second, he was consumed by an adventurous desire to thwart the villain.

"I'll block his game or die for it," he decided. That was a figure of speech. Jack Stafford had no intention of sacrificing his life. It was too full of pleasant possibilities. For instance, there was his assumed guardianship of Miss Adora McKee. He slowed down and examined the portrait of that evidently well-named person.

"She's a mischievous witch," he mused. "Looks like she could keep several men guessing and lead 'em down a blind alley."

He replaced the likeness in his pocket, and put the motor at third speed. When he reached the roadside inn he at once sought the garage at the rear, where the portly landlord, puffing from haste, joined him. This time the stare he directed at his guest glinted with intimate knowledge. He appeared to share a secret.

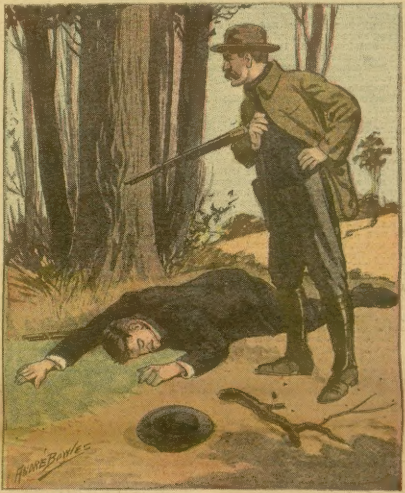
"So you've learned car driving," he commented. "Coming and going I never before saw you at the wheel."

"Nor without the wheel," began Stafford, then stopped short as his host's meaning dawned. A meaning that came wheezing from behind the man's pudgy hand in a sharp whisper.

"You see I know you, Mr. Westveer," he declared. "That smooth shave don't fool old friends. I'm surprised you'd hang around. 'Tain't safe. And that's a bum disguise. Remember the reward and hike."

"What disguise?" demanded his guest.

"You've combed down the pompadour," said the old man. "And instead of the dreamy look you're faking a snappy style. But working clothes and car driving ain't deceiving. You see I know you, and you're right welcome and perfectly safe while I'm alone at the inn. So come in and have your planked fish with sauce. I hain't forgot your likings."



"His devilishly alert mind conceived a fiendish plot."

It transpired that Stafford regretted his memory, for he loathed fish with sauce and despised curried rice. Altogether he dined sparingly while the landlord hovered about. It had occurred to the boniface that his leniency to a rich fugitive deserved a handsome tribute, and he believed it would be forthcoming. Stafford, however, paid the price named—no more—then purchased additional gasoline from Westveer's full purse and went his way. Like the flight of an arrow he headed for the city.

His first care was to return the costly machine and apologize for his prolonged absence. Twilight crept upon him, the last village slipped to the rear. Then distant arc lights gemmed a nearing metropolis. He entered the city limits and reduced speed to the legal pace. Presently the sales garage of Zolla and Gates announced its proximity in letters of fire that automatically dimmed and blazed to catch the eye.

"Here's where Jack Stafford gets blown up like a flat tire," mused the tryer-out of new motors. "Jewett'll read me the riot act."

He drove the long, low car up the incline and parked it inside as Jewett the squat, black-eyed manager, bore down on him like an explosive.

"Accident?" he snapped.

"No," reported Stafford. "She's a hummer. Goes like a comet."

"You've been gone two days," accused the angry manager.

"Exactly," admitted the car-tester.

"Next time you'll stop longer," blazed Jewett. "Step to the office for your check."

"Guess I won't stop for the back pay," said Stafford. He lifted a well-filled suitcase from the mud-splashed roadster. "Good evening," said he in parting, and stepped out into the night.

As he strode along the familiar streets his experience in the north forest faded to a dream. But the roll of money in his pocket and Westveer's clothing in the satchel he carried were proofs of reality. He was indeed the new Paul Westveer, born in the travail of human anguish, and his life was dedicated to a set purpose—a purpose that blotted out his past and fired him with zeal for its accomplishment.

He stopped at a public bath; and when he emerged a somber but rich outfit of his dead employer's gave him an air of distinction, while a few minutes in the barber's chair changed the lapwing side parting of his tawny hair to a conspicuous, upward roll. He glanced in the shop mirror and started with astonishment at his changed appearance. Not even in his brief college course before the family reverses had he looked nearly as well. Despite his rugged tan, his full lips, his slightly wider nostrils and flashing eyes, it seemed to him he again beheld the hunted millionaire. Possibly his desire for that result assisted the illusion. But his vision in the glass so startled him that he promptly razed the pompadour lest city police land him in a murderer's cell. A taxi speedily conveyed him to a high-priced hostelry, where he registered in part of his character as Paul West. Then, as an offset to other baggage than a suitcase, he handed the clerk the main part of his cash for safe-keeping. As the slim, debonair clerk counted the yellow-backs his manner became almost servile.

"Show this gentleman to 34," he directed a bellhop. "And see that everything's right."

"This way," hinted the boy, and led toward an elevator. As Stafford followed, he caught sight of two people just entering the lobby whose faces sent the blood from his own and rooted him to the spot. The man he stared at had the distinguished good looks of a well-born Spaniard. His piercing black eyes were directed toward a distractingly pretty girl whose bright smile dimpled the rose leaf of her rounded cheek. Feature by feature her escort's dark countenance was impressed upon his memory by newspaper cuts of Norton Seydel. And, doubly strange, the girl might have sat for the portrait in his pocket. He knew without being told that he gazed at the enchanting Adora McKee!

CHAPTER III.

AT THE desk Stafford again confronted the hotel clerk.

"Who's that couple?" he demanded. "The dark chap with the pretty girl in blue."

For a moment the debonair clerk hesitated, then looked up at the wealthy patron and pushed forward the open register.

"Newlyweds," said he, pointing out their names. "Just arrived."

With the sensation of one drowning Stafford examined the flowing script and read the signature of Norton Seydel and wife! After all Seydel had not waited. He was sufficiently depraved to slay one hour and make love the next. Stafford hurriedly joined the waiting lad in uniform. He wanted to be alone and think. In his handsome room he clamped his dazed head in both hands and gave himself to the problem. The girl must be rescued—but how?

He pondered the advisability of confronting Seydel with his crime that she might flee from him in horror. No good. Seydel would deny the murder and might accuse the accuser. It was maddening that swift action was called for before he'd perfected himself in the part. Seydel should have decently waited. Instead he had come red-handed from the woods and won his old sweetheart on the rebound.

Disheartened, leaden-eyed with wretched uncertainty, he descended to the first floor. He might again catch a glimpse of the woman he wished to serve. He hoped the sight of her might quicken his dull wits. In his distress he utterly forgot that a sight of him might cause a sensation for which he was not prepared. Fortunately he wore his hat over his yellow poll, and a gray ulster hid Westveer's characteristic raiment.

As he stepped from the elevator women in costly wraps were being escorted to vehicles at the door. By couples and groups they were off to evening entertainments. He watched for the one who occupied his thoughts, but she was not among them. Furious at his helplessness, he idly passed out with the playgoers and became aware that a new make of machine waited at the curb. Instantly he was beside it, examining what was always to him an absorbing object of interest. His presence was welcomed by the delayed chauffeur, who chafed at his fare's delay.

"Deuce take honeymooners!" he fumed. "Women prinking to the last minute's bad enough, but a pair of spooners'll keep me waiting till the tires rot."

"They're the limit," agreed Stafford in a voice that rasped in his excitement.

The man was hired by Seydel! Into his mind leaped a preposterous plan, and seconds were precious.

"That for your job," said he, and held before the man's goggled eyes a bill tinged like the metal it represented. He talked of being an ex-driver and being depressed by a dull evening. He wanted the place for old times' sake and would pay for it.

"Go it," consented the faithless chauffeur. "I was about to quit Williams' anyhow. They're leeches. Work a man to the bone and want his hide. Jump up," he invited, and named his destination—a theater.

The two changed caps and coats and Stafford added the goggles, altho colored glasses were his abhorrence. Back of the wheel he acquainted himself with the car's condition.

"Ignition right?"

"Yes."

"Tank filled?"

"To the brim."

"What's her gait?"

"Fifty and never a backfire."

"Out of sight!" warned Stafford. "They're coming!"

The faithless driver backed into shadow, and immediately witnessed a scene that made him doubt the bill in his pocket and sent him flying from the spot. Stafford, nerves tense and foot ready, watched Seydel and his bride advance to the car. Adora sprang into the tonneau and was seated. Her companion gave a crisp order above the purr of the live motor with one foot on the step. Next moment he spun to the sidewalk like one intoxicated, while his car darted into the night.

On and on drove Stafford, past traffic policemen who waved indignant arms, then down a deserted side street, finally out on a wide suburban thorofare that led toward country homes, while the woman he had thus summarily kidnaped screamed at him to stop, shouted angry epithets at the back of his sphinxlike head, then suddenly kept silence. The silence frightened him. He decreased their mad flight and slightly turned to make certain of her presence. Had she fallen out or swooned? Neither. She was sitting upright folded in her white opera cloak and glaring at his back. The next moment she was on her feet, had torn the goggles from his eyes and cast them into the road.

"So it's you, is it, Mr. Jealous Pate?" she shrilled, holding to his collar for support. "Thought I wouldn't know you. You're a regular dare-devil. It's just like your egotistic impudence to think I'd no right to marry whom I please. And driving! Stop this instant. You'll ditch us. You don't know any more about a car than a mud-hen. Stop!"

Instead Stafford cut out the muffler and let out speed. His mind worked double. With one part of it he knew pursuit was certain and prepared for it. With the other he realized Adora considered him a modern Lochinvar abducting her from his successful rival. She, Westveer's one-time sweetheart, was deceived! He could feel that she was swaying on her feet, but suddenly she released one hand and dealt him a stinging blow.

"You brute," came her high-keyed voice. "You jealous loon who fled at a shadow! You cowardly fool! Take that—and that—and that!"

Thrice her free hand lashed his burning cheek. Then he knew she had flung herself back in the seat. Her mood had passed from furious anger to hysterical mirth. He heard peal after peal of laughter.

"Poor Norton," she choked. "He looked like a crab. It was terribly upsetting."

Stafford caught the words and his heart lightened. She was amused at Seydel's downfall. A woman who laughs at her lover is not in love. But why had she been tricked into marriage? He pondered this while he rushed on under the star-studded sky. He was doing the only thing possible. He was taking her home. He intended she should have time to consider her matrimonial venture. Seydel had appeared to her as from the grave. Until then she had thought of him as one martyred in her behalf. And the man who had supposedly died for love of her easily induced her to let him live for her. She was unthinkingly swept into his arms. Westveer's agent had been almost too late.

With ears strained for the sound of pursuing cars he extracted from the unfamiliar engine every unit of speed. Before them the twin headlights seemed to burn an opening into which they instantly rushed. Past them danced groves, buildings, fences, in a grotesque, drunken reel, while late wayfarers hastily left them an undisputed track. The girl sat still with hands gripping the seat. She had divined his goal and seemed content. Before long the far-reaching horns of light penetrated a parklike spot Stafford had often passed while testing motors. It surrounded a quaint, many-gabled building that he knew to be the McKee residence. They were at the spot, had stopped at the iron gate.

"I see you can drive," admitted Adora, as she sprang to the ground. "But you can't drive me, Mr. Paul Westveer. Remember that!"

He wanted to give her a word of warning. He had planned a sentence he hoped might set her thinking. But she darted from him, and the heavy gate clanged at her flying heels.

CHAPTER IV.

"SHE'S a willful, vindictive breaker of hearts," decided the would-be deliverer of Adora McKee. "I don't know but Westveer's lucky in losing her, and that his cousin'll be enough punished by getting her. Anyhow, I've done what I could on short notice. Now it's up to the doctor. Maybe he can manage her. I can't, and I bet Seydel can't—after this."

As this passed thru his mind he was darting ahead in an opposite direction from his coming. A strained glance had revealed the far lights of a pursuing motor. If caught it meant not only a jail sentence but the relinquishment of Westveer's charge. He would at least be haled in court for abruptly separating a groom from his bride. And by day no one, including the bride, would mistake him for other than he was—a car-tester for Zolla and Gates. But he had no intention of being caught. The roads, to him, were as familiar as a dooryard. He shut off his lights and muffled the engine. Ahead was a forest where a blind track led into a woodcutter's slash. Into this he crept until far from the pike. Would the policemen Seydel doubtless sent after him look for his track? With blood pounding he anxiously waited. He saw the advancing gleam. It stopped, and so did his heart and breath. He knew they were examining the turn, but the unused path was brick-hard. Nothing hinted of his passing, so the car-light moved and Stafford breathed deep. He backed into the open and proceeded with searchlights burning the night. At a horse trough he carried water to the overheated engine and noted the car ahead had likewise received attention at the spot.

"Now she's ready for another spurt," he concluded. "Barring a blowout, I'll deliver her on schedule time."

By lengthy detours he arranged to enter the city on the further side. There was the danger of delivering the machine at Williams' garage. There was a chance that the displaced and, doubtless, displeased chauffeur might report him. So he abruptly shot up to the garage doors, then promptly abandoned the car. He was deadly tired and frightfully hungry. Food had not passed his lips since his little relished meal at the forest inn. With long strides he sought an all-night restaurant, but at the first corner a heavy hand gripped his shoulder and a throaty voice spoke the formula of his arrest.

"You're my prisoner," stated the policeman.

"On what charge?" demanded Stafford.

"They'll tell you that plenty soon at headquarters," said the officer, and adroitly snapped a manacle on his prisoner's left wrist. The mate to it Stafford noticed with surprise was fastened to the officer's right arm. He had been ready and waiting for this very opportunity. After all the chauffeur had notified the authorities. No wonder. The man didn't wish to pose as a maniac driver. He had disowned the escapade. Possibly he had claimed to be overpowered by a stranger and his car stolen. As this passed thru the prisoner's mind a word caught his attention.

"I don't need to show the warrant, Mr. Westveer," intoned the officer. "It's been ready any time this three months."

"Westveer!" ejaculated the prisoner.

With Seydel alive and in the city the machinery of the law still hunted for the murderer! The situation was grotesque. He knew explanation was useless. The officer would remind him that a hotel register might show the signature of a dozen Norton Seydels. The matter must be cleared in court. He'd be held until he either produced the live victim or became Jack Stafford.

The very thing! His likeness to Westveer was suddenly and acutely undesirable. He wanted his supper and bed. He very much wanted to be the penniless car-tester.

"You're barking up the wrong tree," he blurted out. "My name's Stafford. I work for Zolla and Gates."

"Oh!" jeered the unbelieving officer. "Then how about that bunch of cash in the hotel safe? And how about a 'phone message from the keeper of Wildwood Inn?"

"So," thought Stafford with disgust, "the fat landlord fell for the lure of the reward." To the official he had held in his tracks by force he made a proposition.

"Come on around the block and ask Jewett who I am. He'll tell you quick. You know Jewett, the manager. And you ought to know me."

At the last word the athletic tryer-out of new motors strode forward and dragged the protesting officer in his wake. In vain he pulled and threatened. Vainly he settled back like a balky mule, but Stafford noticed he carefully abstained from summoning aid. He was not a heroic figure. So he failed to sound his night call for help, and finally trotted at his prisoner's side until the manacled six-footer paused before a night-enshrouded dwelling and rang the bell. At the third pull an upper window shot up and a head protruded.

"Who's there?" demanded Jewett's voice.

"A policeman," quickly explained Stafford. "You're to come down and identify a prisoner."

The word police had immediate effect. Before the breathless officer could compose his sweating visage Jewett unlocked the front door and confronted the two by snapped-on hall lights.

"Oh, it's you, is it, Stafford?" he boomed. "Get out! I'm done with you. You're discharged."

"Hear that?" demanded Stafford of the perspiring officer. "Tells you who I am before you ask. Satisfied?"

He wasn't. Not quite. From his pocket he drew a printed sheet and began to read it off.

"About six feet in height; straight nose; yellow hair; mustache to match; lazy blue eyes; dresses in dark clothes; languid in move——"

At this the officer stopped his perusal.

"Description don't fit within a mile," he sputtered. "Sure you know him?" he asked Jewett.

"Sorry to say I do," rasped Jewett. "Discharged him this evening. He'd been out two days with one of our machines. He's a professional tryer-out."

"Sure he isn't Westveer, the millionaire murderer, posing as a chauffeur?" persisted the bluecoat.

Jewett laughed. "He's a tramp mechanic," he said. "Never'll have a million unless he steals it. If that's all, officer, I'd like to go back to bed."

"Chance resemblance," muttered the policeman.

Hesitatingly he produced a key and unsnapped the shared handcuffs. Evidently he had no idea of holding his prisoner for the lighter charge of abducting a bride and borrowing a car. Five minutes later the ex-car-tester headed for a restaurant and the policeman resumed his beat.

Back at the McKee homestead another spirited scene was enacted. Seydel, who had followed the abductor in a second car which traveled slower than the one containing the pursuing police, left it waiting his pleasure at the ornamental gate while he traversed the garden path and knocked at his father-in-law's door. Again and again he rapped until he heard the approach within of a slow and heavy tread. Then a hand fumbled at the lock, and he faced the rotund physician, who eyed him with undoubted displeasure.

"I want to speak to Adora," said he. "She's here. I believe she bribed a driver to fetch her back. She's a fickle jade."

"Sir," warned the doctor, "remember you refer to my daughter. If she's home I'm relieved. You recall that I opposed the union. Your story of being robbed by the hunter found dead sounds to me thin, mighty thin. Personally I despise you. A man who leaves home so abruptly that a relative is accused of his murder has something up his sleeve besides his arm. That's my opinion. Dora's welcome to her own."

"Then I want to hear them," blazed Seydel. "I've a right to an explanation and an apology."

"Have you?" inquired a bell-like voice. Adora in a ravishing silk robe stood on the open stairway. "Well, you shall have the explanation," said she, descending half the stair length. "I married you with the glamour on. Now it's off, and the marriage is off. I've discovered that I don't want to be married, Norton. I suppose it isn't treating you right. But I'm very, very glad Paul Westveer whisked me off home."

"What?" shouted Seydel. He stared up at her with eyes bulging. His knees shook. His face bleached to parchment. He was possessed by soul-sickening fright. "Who brought you home?"

"Paul Westveer," she emphasized. "Now that you're here he has come out of hiding, and he's learned to drive. He brought me back at an awful clip. I thought he'd ditch us. I was furious at him. But I'm here, and I'm going to stay till my mind's made up."

Seydel passed this over. "What did he say to you?" he demanded. "What did he tell you?"

"Never spoke a word," declared the girl. "Took my ragging him like a lamb." Again she burst into peals of laughter, laughter that reassured her father exactly as it had encouraged Stafford. But the laughter died in her white throat because of amazement. Seydel appeared like one who sees a wronged ghost. His skin was alabaster. His eyes were horror-filled. Without another word he turned and dashed back to his waiting car, and was off like one pursued by demons.

This capital story will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

OBJECT OF SUSPICION.

As Gillilly sat huddled on the top step leading to his house and felt the misty rain against his face, he wished he had not been so everlastingly reserved. He wished he had been wont to mingle with his fellow men, especially since coming to the suburb a few weeks previous to live. These reflections were surging thru his soul because Gillilly was locked out. In addition to this fact it was after twelve o'clock, his wife was away on a visit, and he didn't know the people next door.

He couldn't go to a hotel because there wasn't a hotel in the suburb. He couldn't take a train back to town because the trains had stopped running by that time. It grew colder and colder.

Gillilly felt that he must do something. So, tumbling down his steps, he strode across the wet lawn to the neighboring house, where he rang the bell.

"Good evening," said Gillilly to the blue pajamas that finally opened the door. "I'm Mr. Gillilly and I live next door. I'm locked out. Would you mind lending me all the door keys you have? Perhaps one of them will fit my door."

The blue pajamas laughed a cold, sarcastic laugh. "You have your nerve," he said. "Quite likely that I'm going to help you break into a neighbor's house on any such yarn as that! I happen to know that the people next door are away visiting!"

"I saw the trunks go!" floated triumphantly down the stairs in feminine tones.

"Mrs. Gillilly went away, but I'm at home," explained Gillilly.

The blue pajamas laughed again. "Good night," he said. But Gillilly thrust his foot into the crack of the door.

"I don't blame you," he said, "but I'm telling you the truth. Here are letters and cards——"

"He may have murdered Mr. Gillilly and taken his papers to help along his story!" excitedly called the feminine voice. 'Don't you believe him, George!"

"I can't hang around outdoors on a night like this!" protested Gillilly. "Come along with me, and I'll prove to you that I know the house!"

The blue pajamas wavered, then slipped on an overcoat and tramped across the lawn with Gillilly. On the porch behind them the owner of the feminine voice stood watchfully.

"I've got the hatchet, George, if he does anything to you!" she called.

The third key that the neighbor tried turned in the lock of Gillilly's front door, but the blue pajamas stopped him. "What wood," he demanded, "is the dresser in the back bedroom on your second floor?"

Gillilly is the most unobserving of men. If Mrs. Gillilly should paper the whole inside of the house with purple wall paper with yellow polka dots Gillilly would not be likely to notice it.

"I don't know!" he said.

"There!" cried the blue pajamas, sternly. "I knew you were a fake!" Then, pocketing the keys, he strode away indignantly.

"Wait a minute!" Gillilly begged. "If you won't believe me and let me into my own house, let me sleep in your barn."

"Don't do it, George!" cautioned the voice from the front porch. "He'll smoke or something and set the gasoline on fire. They always do."

"No go, old chap," said the blue pajamas, firmly. "All I've got to say to you is to beat it quick before the patrol wagon gets here! I'm not going to permit Gillilly's house to be robbed, even if he is a stuck-up dub!"

Gillilly slunk away, and passed the night in a secluded corner of the suburban railroad station, where only three-quarters of him got wet.

At noon the next day he walked into the office where he knew he should find the owner of the blue pajamas.

"How do you do?" he said beamingly, to that nonplused person. "My name's Gillilly. I'm the stuck-up dub who lives next door to you. I think I owe you a lunch. Besides, I'd like to impress my countenance upon your memory by way of preparing for future emergencies!"

* * *

Selection.

"Them same people wants to engage board fur next summer," said Mrs. Corntossel.

"Well, we won't take 'em," replied her husband. "I want somebody that kin tell some new jokes an' play some new tunes on the piano."

The Jewels of Jezebel

Or, The Last Days of a King

By T. C. Harbaugh

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CHAPTER IX.

FOR some time after his interview with the Duke of Burgundy before the House of the Sword, Arnace DePlessis remained reflective where he was. One thought more than others ran thru his mind. Why should he go to the house in Rue Bastiani and throw its occupant into the Seine—an old woman of whom he had never heard? He had never descended to the role of murderer, and had never drawn blood save in self-defense, and it galled him to think that he had been picked out for an assassin.

He was willing to assist Philip of Burgundy to save the King from his enemies, but here was a new turn of affairs, and he was expected to pull some of Burgundy's chestnuts out of the fire, perhaps at the risk of his life. The whole thing exasperated him. It brought up a line of thought that made his blood run cold.

"It might do no harm to take a look at the house, and perhaps to see what is inside," he suddenly thought. "Who the Devil's Sister is is a mystery to me, and I have a notion to make a little investigation."

He waited till the night had deepened for his adventure, and when the hour arrived he sauntered away, making sure that his sword was easy in its socket, for he might run across some of the ruffians with whom already he had had a test of steel.

The Rue Bastiani was one of the oldest streets in Paris, and also one of the shortest. Its houses were old affairs which had withstood the hurrying years, and tho in its time it had once had a meritorious name, it had by now lost all its old pride and was the abode of people who had no pride of birth and no illustrious escutcheon.

Why did the great Duke of Burgundy want the old woman in the house of the porch to become one of the victims of the Seine? What was the Devil's Sister to this nobleman whose rank was almost that of King?

De Plessis took a short cut to Rue Bastiani. He was soon among its old houses, and presently espied the one described by Burgundy. There was not the sign of a light anywhere about it. It was as dark as the tombs of the Egyptian kings.

For a little while the young Burgundian stood near the house and watched it guardedly. The longer he looked the deeper grew the mystery which had gnawed at his soul ever since he had heard of it.

At length he crossed the intervening space and went up the rotting wooden steps to the door. He turned the knob half mechanically, and to his surprise the dark portal swung dismally ajar. He was inside almost before he knew it.

There was no light before him, but a smell of emptiness came to his nostrils. He had been sent on a wild-goose chase to an untenanted domicile. The young man inwardly cursed himself for listening to the great Duke.

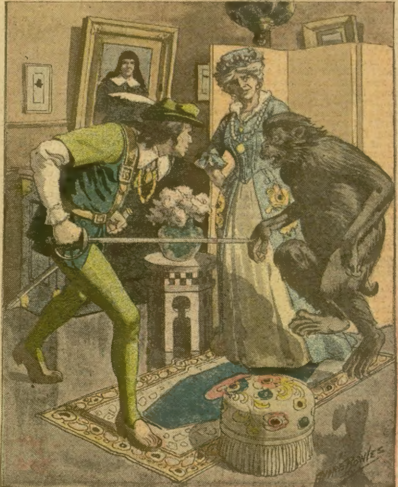
"Why should he take me for a fool?" he asked himself. "I played into his hands like a ten-year-old zany."

He was about to quit the disgusting place when he caught the glimmer of a light at the top of a narrow staircase which it revealed, and he came to a dead halt. The light seemed to grow broader, tho he could see that it came from a candle. By and by it revealed the ghoulish figure of a woman who was apparently looking down upon him.

"Is that you, Andree?" said a squeakish voice.

"Why not?" answered De Plessis, moving up the stair.

At the top of the flight he had the candle thrust into his face, and a pair of eyes such as he had never seen in a human head seemed to read his very thoughts. It was an old face, but not an unhandsome one. There were traces of former beauty in every line of it—the beauty of days which had passed with the years.



The ape was in the air.

"You are not Andree!" cried the old woman, drawing back. "You face me with a lie. I know ye not."

"Which is no reason that we should not become acquainted," De Plessis replied. "Truth for truth," he went on. "I am Arnace de Plessis and you——"

"I see thru the trick," laughed the other. "Some one has sent your here."

What could the young Burgundian say to this?

"I have a penchant for looking into old houses," he evaded. "It grew up with my boyhood. You live alone here?"

"Come and see."

De Plessis followed the flickering candle down a dark corridor, and saw the old woman open a narrow door almost at the end of it. He passed into the room after her. She placed the light on a table and waved a scrawny hand around the room.

The Burgundian was astounded. It was not a hovel. On every side was evidence of wealth. The walls were hidden by the richest tapestries; the carpet might have come from Bagdad from its richness, and the heavy mahogany furniture with its golden borderings suggested to De Plessis that he was in the apartment of a princess in disguise. And this was the woman he had been commanded to murder and cast into the Seine!

The woman's sharp eyes, eagle-like and black, were watching him like a hawk.

"Since you have come," suddenly said the strange creature, "I will play hostess as best I can. Take the gilt chair if you please. A king occupied it once."

De Plessis sat down and saw the woman glide to a sideboard from which she took a bottle of wine and two chased goblets. She bore them proudly to the table and filled the glasses to their golden brims.

"To whose health?" said she, as she raised her hand, disclosing a heavy gold bracelet set with jewels.

De Plessis hesitated. He must play politics now. A slip might prove disastrous.

"Let us say to the King's," he ventured, looking his companion full in the face.

"I am with you, messire," was the reply. "To the King's health," and she drank her wine with the air of one greatly pleased.

As she placed her goblet on the table she leaned across the board and said in a low tone:

"Where from, messire?"

"From Burgundy."

The woman recoiled as if a serpent had lifted its deadly head above the table.

"So you are serving Duke Philip?"

The words were a rasp now.

"I knew it! I dreamed it last night!" she exclaimed. "So you have come to kill me?"

"I?"

"You, messire. You are the paid hireling of Duke Philip. I see it all. This man who on the streets of Paris calls me the Devil's Sister can't breathe well while I live. I am ready for the blow, messire."

She rose to her feet, and with one movement tore open the silks that hid her bosom, and looked straight into the young Burgundian's eyes.

"Why don't you carry out the commands of your master?" she went on. "Your eye is clear, and I have no doubt that you have used your sword ere now."

De Plessis was silent.

"You are more than what the Duke calls you," he said, after a brief silence. "You are not friendless, for you spoke the name of Andree when first you saw me. Is he not coming now? I hear footsteps on the stair."

"It is Andree," was the reply. "Withhold your sword, messire, till you have seen him."

De Plessis turned halfway round and looked at the door. In another moment there came into the room a being that enlarged the Burgundian's eyes. At the same time it made his flesh creep.

An enormous ape, standing as erect as a man, confronted him, a demon with the fire of his native forests still in his eyes, and his hairy arms hanging at his sides, but with the terrible hands clinched and quivering.

"Come, Andree," said the Devil's Sister to the terrible-looking thing. "This gentleman has come to part us."

At this the ape opened his mouth and displayed the teeth of a monster, but the next instant he turned to his mistress with a smile. De Plessis, fearing an attack, had sent his hand to his sword hilt and it was welded there.

"That is the man, Andree!" cried the woman. "His life, not mine. Now!"

The ape was in the air before De Plessis could draw. But the Burgundian's agility threw him back, and as his blade struck, the light was extinguished and the room was in total darkness. The young man's breath came fast and furiously.

"Find him, Andree!" he heard in the dark. "Find and tear, tear, tear!"

De Plessis had backed against the wall, and with every nerve at full tension was cursing the man who had lured him into that house.

Surely the woman was the Devil's Sister.

CHAPTER X.

DE PLESSIS was in the greatest peril of his life. The snarls and growls of the unseen colossus of the wild jungle sent a shiver to his heart, and he wondered how soon the beast would throw himself upon him.

Did Duke Philip really seek the death of the Devil's Sister, or was his real design to get rid of him (De Plessis), knowing that the woman in the Rue Bastiani was so terribly guarded? These thoughts, however, were dissipated when he remembered the curses the woman had heaped upon the Duke's head.

"He is still in the room," he heard the old woman say to the monster he could not see. "Tear, tear, tear!"

There was a movement in front of him. Arnace crept along the wall in search of the door, and his heart seemed to leap into his throat when his hand touched the knob. He jerked the portal open with a cry of deliverance, and went headlong down the rickety stair. It seemed ready to give way under his weight, but he cared not for that. His agility landed him on the floor below, and then he turned upon the something that was raging after him.

He leaned forward with an oath of vengeance on his lips, and thrust outward with all his skill and strength. There was a cry almost human in its intonation, and the next instant there was a fall at his feet. The steel of Burgundy had gone home.

"Andree? Andree?" cried a voice in the darkness overhead. "What has the miscreant done to you?"

De Plessis answered with a victorious laugh, and then found the door leading to the street. He was out of the devil's den.

It took him some moments to get his breath back again.

"If Philip of Burgundy wants the old hag thrown into the Seine he must do the job himself," he muttered, as he started off down the dim street, sword in hand.

Where should he go? Probably the Duke was waiting for his report at the House of the Sword, so he resolved not to proceed thither at once. He would go to Odette's lodgings and tell her of his adventure, tho most likely she was with the King.

It proved true as he feared, for the beautiful girl's apartments were empty. Arnace sat down to rest a while. She might soon return, and he was anxious to see her.

It was an hour's wait in silence, and then De Plessis heard footsteps on the stair. Some one was coming, perhaps Odette at last. The young adventurer watched the door closely, and saw it slowly open. To his amazement he saw the face of Philip of Burgundy with its evil eyes and pointed beard.

"Come in, my lord," said De Plessis, really glad at heart that the man he would have avoided stood before him.

"I did not expect to meet you here," began Philip, in a voice that shook a little. "You remember that the girl is of our own country, and I thought to drop in upon her for a passing moment."

"Evidently she is with the King," De Plessis answered. "I have not been here long. I have but just returned from my adventure in the Rue Bastiani."

At this the face of the great Duke took on a look of pleasure.

"You are prompt," said he. "And I suppose the Seine has another mystery."

"If may have for anything I know," said Arnace, raspingly. "It will be a very strange one if it has. I fancy they don't find apes in the waters very often."

"What's that?" exclaimed the Duke, leaning forward, his face quite white and tense. "By my life! I didn't send you ape hunting."

"As to that I really know not," smiled Arnace. "But I found one just the same."

"And the Devil's Sister?" gasped Burgundy.

"She is still weeping over her guard, I suppose."

Duke Philip arose and took three hasty strides around the room, but turning suddenly on his heel, came back to De Plessis and stood before him.

"I sent you to put the woman out of the way," he said, his face as red as a rose. "I care not for apes. It was the woman who was to go to the Seine."

"Then, my lord, I turn that little experience over to you."

Philip recoiled and laid his hand on the hilt of his rapier.

"Oh, if it is that you want you shall have your fill," and De Plessis was on his feet with his blade drawn.

"I did not come to Paris to be a hired assassin!" cried he, facing the stern-faced man before him. "There was never a murderer in the household of De Plessis, and I am not going to be the first to break the rule."

"Then know that you are no longer in my service," was the answer.

"For which assurance receive my thanks, Philip of Burgundy. I shall go back to the old home without a taint on my good blade."

The great Duke scowled maliciously. He was now anxious to get out of the room, and laid his hand on his doorknob.

"Tell me one thing," cried De Plessis. "Who is the woman you call the Devil's Sister? She lives in a room as fine as any you find in the royal palace. She is bejeweled like a princess, but why does she have an ape for her companion? Answer me that, my lord."

Philip only snarled again and his face grew darker.

"Why didn't you ask her?" cried he. "If the surroundings did not befit her case, why didn't you worm her secret from her?"

"That would have been futile work, I know."

"She was beautiful at one time."

"I could see that. No menial blood runs in her veins."

The Duke drew away from the door and folded his arms upon his ample bosom. The shadow of a smile stole over his face.

"Did you ever hear of the Rose Princess?" he asked.

"From my childhood," answered De Plessis. "But it is said she was carried off by bandits and lost forever."

"So goes the legend in Burgundy," grinned Burgundy.

"Then the Devil's Sister is that lost Princess?"

"Have I said so?"

"Not in words, messire, but by intimation. If it is so, then I am glad I killed the ape and not the Rose Princess," retorted De Plessis, with a sigh of relief.

Once more Duke Philip backed to the door.

"Since you have come to Paris for adventure you are liable to get your fill," he growled, and there was a biting curse at the end of his sentence. "My advice is, young sir, that you go back to the sheepfolds of Burgundy and lead a simple pastoral life. Maybe Odette will return to you when the King has no further need of her."

De Plessis flushed to the temples.

"It was you, sir, who brought her to Paris to amuse a madman," he exclaimed. "For all your evil Odette is as pure as when she bade farewell to the hills of Burgundy."

"Think as you please," was the snarling answer. "She is in a pretty fix now—hated by Queen Isabel with all the passions of a jealous woman whose only love is for the jewels of Jezebel."

"I have heard of the accursed stones," said De Plessis. "Let any one touch Odette in hatred, and the sword of De Plessis will come swiftly to the rescue."

Duke Philip laughed.

"It seemeth to me," said he, "that you know not the secrets of Paris. One does not have to touch an enemy here to obtain vengeance. There are ways and means by which a rival can be removed without feeling the touch of a hand."

"That I know, messire. There are makers and buyers of poisons in Paris."

"And who is more able to buy than Isabel of Bavaria?"

De Plessis felt his face grow white with horror.

"I know more than you think," he cried. "I know there is a plot against the mad King. I know that it exists among the nobility, for the common populace love Charles VI. I know that even now armed bands are being brought into Paris. I know that Queen Isabel walks the palace corridors at night like a sneaking spy——"

"Looking for the lost jewels of Jezebel, my dear boy."

"And you advise that I go back to Burgundy with affairs at such a tension? Speak to yon portrait on the wall, not to me. I shall see this adventure out. Tho it cost me my head, I will stand between danger and Charles VI. and Odette."

"And lose those pretty locks of yours?" sneered the Duke.

"I invite the consequences of peril. Let the Queen find the jewels of Jezebel, or lose them forever. What care I? The King is in his last days. The madness will finally kill him. If he were not mad every plotter would keep his distance. I am for King Charles of France, and when I see him——"

"When you see him!" broke in the Duke, with a rippling laugh of derision. "You seal your doom the moment you set foot in the royal palace. Take that warning from Philip of Burgundy."

For the third time the Duke laid his hand on the doorknob, and De Plessis watched him depart in silence. He went over to Odette's silken chair and threw himself into it.

"Here's a pretty plot!" cried he, his face paling again. "I swear by my sword," which he cast upon the table, "that I will stand between the King and Odette and the devil's minions; and it is the oath of the last of the De Plessis line!"

CHAPTER XI.

"WELCOME, ma chere," smiled King Charles, in jovial mood, to Odette, who had entered the palace by a back stairs and thence had come into his private chamber by a secret door.

The young woman answered Charles with a laugh.

"It is almost a world without end when you are not here," the King went on. "We shall have to celebrate this event. Bring wine from yon closet, and mind you, don't forget your private vintage."

Odette skipped to the wine board and placed two bottles and a brace of chased goblets on a gold tray. As she came toward the King her foot struck an obstruction in the carpet and she uttered a cry of alarm.

In vain she tried to regain her equipoise, and the next moment she went to the floor, breaking into a thousand fragments the contents of the tray. Charles laughed heartily at the mishap, whilst the poor girl blushed and paled alternately.

"Fortunately you did not spill all there is in the closet," exclaimed the King. "You will find that it still contains the best vintage on earth, and your accident shall not prevent our having a few good draughts."

Odette rose to her feet and resumed her errand. Her own private wine had been lost, but no matter, there was just as good left in the royal cupboard.

It was a most fortunate accident for the girl, for in the wine which she had spilled were the six drops of the Golden Draught which Queen Isabel had placed in the bottle.

"Tell me what the latest news is on the streets," said the King, as he replaced his glass on the table. "Is my dear friend Orleans still bringing his minions into Paris?"

"So far as I can learn he is as busy as ever."

"And you have seen some of these gentlemen?"

"They are not very enticing to look at," replied Odette. "Most of them are Italians and Spaniards."

"A goodly mixture!" laughed Charles. "And, pray, where does my illustrious brother quarter them?"

"He has some of them concealed in the old barracks along the Seine; others seem to be mere loiterers among the parks."

"It must be costing Louis a lot of money, but his purse is always full, and, then, should he need money he can borrow from the Queen."

Odette laid her head upon the King's cheek.

"Has her majesty found the jewels of Jezebel?" she inquired.

"Not yet, my friend, tho she has ransacked the palace for the accursed gems. Go feel the walls of this room if you will, and you will discover by a lot of faint indentations that they have been well sounded. The Queen's spleen is rising, and soon she will have the walls torn out in her mad search. But the jewels are safe from her busy fingers."

It was very late when the couple parted, the King to retire to his bedchamber, and the girl to glide down the dark stairway into the royal gardens and thence into the street.

Had she emerged from the palace by the main staircase she might have collided with a figure which she cared not to meet. Queen Isabel was standing against one of the walls of the long corridor with white face and gleaming eyes. She was within hearing of the King's chamber, and for many minutes she had remained in ghostly silence there. Sounds of merriment which came from the room told her that Charles and Odette were together, and her teeth came together in madness while she listened.

Odette's wine would become the wine of death, and erelong she would not please the mad King. Perhaps she would fall on the street on her way home, or perchance the Golden Draught would do its fearful work under her own roof. Maloch's draughts had never failed; they had helped many a poor mortal across the Styx, and Isabel was congratulating herself that Charon would soon call for Odette's soul.

She did not leave her station till all sounds had ceased, and then she knew Odette was gone—gone with death at her heart, gone no more to be the King's friend and one of the obstacles in her way.

Isabel at last slipped down the aisle and listened at the King's door. Silence. Charles had retired; there was a dim light in the room and the door was locked. With a dangerous smile at her lips she went back to her own apartments.

"I would like to know," she said, speaking half aloud. "I would like to know if the draught has acted."

Presently she changed her garments for plainer ones, and armed with her Italian dagger, left the palace and found herself on the street. She remembered what Maloch had said. Within three hours the poison would do its work, and its victim would sleep the unbroken sleep of death. The allotted time had passed, and the Queen of France could visit with immunity the home of Odette.

There was the elasticity of triumph in her strides. Her eagerness carried her forward with high hopes, and at last she turned into the street where Odette dwelt.

Thus far she had escaped recognition, altho she had encountered more than one band of revelers. They were not looking for her, and the Queen was the last person whom they expected to see.

"I am here," she sighed, as she reached a darkened house in which the King had installed the girl from Burgundy.

Queen Isabel drew back and looked up at the windows, which shed forth not a ray of light. It was all over. The wine had accomplished its object and she was free of one spy.

Isabel clutched at her heart to still the excitement, as she went up the steps and opened the door, which was not locked. A pretty place, was it not, for the Queen of France to be found? But a woman's jealousy thinks of nothing but revenge, and she was like all her sex.

She had never entered that house, for why should she seek Odette, who was the only creature who could bring moments of sunshine to a demented man who, tho her husband, stood between her and her ambition?

She was soon on the stairway, with her brain on fire. Somewhere in the house slept the beauty of Burgundy, whether alive or not her mistress did not know. Queen Isabel, clutching the Italian dagger beneath her tunic, panted in the hallway above. At one end of this corridor burned a taper set against the wall, throwing its fickle light a few feet around. Isabel gasped. That light must be opposite Odette's door.

The Queen reasoned this with a smile on her face, now as white as her wedding gown when she stood with Charles VI. at the altar and took the sacred vows which united them. But she forgot all this as she crept forward with her eye on the light.

Presently the shape of a door came into view. She had been right; the nest of the Burgundian bird had been found. Queen Isabel paused there to bring all her nerves to her command. Seconds seemed to resolve themselves into hours. The beating of her heart sounded like a martial drum.

At last she laid her hand on the brazen knob, and was about to turn it, when it was turned by some one inside, and the door swung open before her. There was a gasp and a recoil on the Queen's part. She could actually feel the cold whiteness that took instant possession of her face.

Odette stood before her, clad in her snowy nightgown, and looking more beautiful than ever.

She carried a freshly lighted taper in her hand, and its light revealed the rich hair that streamed over her white shoulders, which rivaled any in the kingdom.

"Your majesty is welcome," said Odette, the first to break the strained silence. "You will kindly pardon my appearance. Does the King want me?"

These words were poison to the stately woman upon whose face the light of the little candle fell.

"The King does not want you," Isabel replied, beating down the madness that rankled in her heaving bosom. "Life in the palace is monotonous. I came forth incognito for a stroll, and thought I would see how you were situated."

There was a lie in the Queen's eyes, if not on her lips, as the discerning girl could see.

"I shall be pleased to show you," said Odette, smiling. "If you will but tarry a while——"

"Not tonight." The dagger underneath the Queen's tunic was tightly gripped. Her blood was surging like a lava tide thru every vein. One stroke would be enough. The poison had failed. Was Odette immune to the deadly arts of Maloch?

"I must be on," continued Isabel. "I am sorry I have disturbed you. The King is not ill, thank Heaven!" and before Odette could reply, Isabel was moving down the hall.

The girl had drunk the wine and was still alive, and with the Italian dagger in her hand the Queen had not had the courage to finish the work of the Golden Draught.

Queen tho she was, she was yet a woman.

CHAPTER XII.

CHARLES VI. was having a little amusement of his own. He was playing ninepins in his chamber and

GOOD WORK

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"My mind is clearer and my body stronger than ever before. "There's a Reason." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

there were no onlookers. Whenever he played ninepins he was not mad; his mind needed exercise, and he became sportive, as if to keep back the malady which was fast hurrying him to the tombs of his ancestors.

The Queen had not bothered him for some time, but he knew that she had not recovered the jewels of Jezebel.

As the King was about to make another play, there came footsteps down the corridor, and he withheld the throw. Charles smiled as the door opened, for Prince Louis, his brother, stood on the threshold.

"Welcome, brother," the monarch said, as the Prince came in. "I have been wanting company this long time, and you are so good to please."

It was a crafty face that Louis had, the face of a subtle plotter, dark and almost serpentlike. A well-cultivated mustache overshadowed his lips, and beneath his chin was the waxed point of his iron-gray beard. He was well dressed, after the manner of those in any way connected with the royal line, and the sword he carried had a great ruby set in the tip of its hilt.

He stopped near the table in the middle of the room and threw a hasty glance over the book the King had been reading.

"I have come with sore news, your majesty," he said, at last.

"You seldom bring me good news," was the reply. "I suppose it is from the seat of war."

"We have lost another battle to the English, but it was not a great affair. The legion commanded by the Duke of Troyes showed the white feather and left the enemy to reap the laurels."

"As they have done before," answered Charles, showing spirit. "We must get rid of these cowards. I am daily beset with troubles, and some of them come from near the throne."

The Prince started a little, but did not speak.

"I am glad you have come for another reason," suddenly exclaimed the King. "You know what is going on in Paris. Tell me, brother, if there is any truth in the story that strange men come into Paris by night, and are quartered in various places which hide them by day?"

"I have seen none such," deliberately lied Orleans. "There may be some color to the report, for the Queen's birthday is near at hand, and there is to be a tournament."

"But why bring foreign swashbucklers into the city to assist in the festivities?"

Charles was leaning on his chair with his chin in his hand.

"I am going to be plain with you, brother," he resumed, covering Orleans with a searching look which could not be avoided. "It is said that you have been busy directing these men to their quarters. What is your reply?"

"It is false!" cried Orleans. "Why should I help to house men who for aught I know may be cutthroats? Think you that I am playing traitor to your majesty?"

"I trust few people nowadays," was the reply. "All France knows my condition. Some day erelong Paris will cry out: 'The King is dead! Long live the King!' But I am not going to the tomb until I have struck my enemies. I have this report from those who have seen these rascals in the city. Here is the holy missal. Swear upon it, my brother, that you know nothing of these doings."

The lips of Orleans came together, and his steel-gray eyes appeared to flash.

"Am I not to be trusted without this indignity?" cried he. "Am I to be accounted a traitor to France? Your old malady is coming back."

"I feel it not, messire. I am better than I have been for days. There is no madness in me just now."

"But enemies have been dawdling with you," said Orleans. "I am not so blind but I can see that."

"Then you will not take the oath on the holy missal?" inquired the perturbed King. "Remember we are brothers. The same mother, peace to her sainted soul! gave us to the world. Would to Heaven I had not been the first born. 'Tis said that when I was born at the noon hour a blackness came over Paris like unto the one which enveloped Jerusalem when the Son of God gave up the ghost. You will not swear?"

"On fools' reports?" cried Orleans, whose face had suddenly turned white. "I will not swear!"

Charles pushed the missal from him and crossed himself.

"Who came to your majesty with such reports?" asked Orleans. "Was it the fair tattler from Burgundy, or Duke Philip, whose heart is a living lie?"

"Ha! When did you and the Duke fall out?" exclaimed the King.

"When I stripped the fleece from the wolf's back," hissed Orleans.

"There may be some more stripping ere the game is played," laughed the King. "Stand over yonder."

The Prince hesitated.

"Stand over there," repeated Charles, pointing to a certain spot on the floor.

With grating teeth and his hand on his jeweled rapier, Orleans suddenly obeyed. The next instant the King sprang from his chair, and bounding across the chamber, locked the heavy door, and coolly placed the key in his pocket.

"You are against me!" he cried, whirling upon his brother. "You are one of the wolves whom the Queen has set on my heels. I might as well begin with you."

There was madness, but not that of the old malady, in the King's eyes. He suddenly buttoned his doublet from throat to waist, threw back the lace of his sleeves, and from a rack within easy reach snatched a rapier whose polished blade glittered in the light.

"If you win," cried he, the words leaping like fireballs from his mouth, "France will have a Charles VII.; if I win, there will be no Orleans to curse the world with his lies. Draw, traitorous brother! No doubt our mother cursed the day she gave thee to France."

Louis of Orleans, seeing the peril he was in, whipped out his blade.

"I hesitate to draw against the King," said he.

"Consider me one of the scum of Paris. Think not of me as Charles VI. Guard!"

Biting his lips till they bled, Louis planted himself firmly on the carpet and awaited the King's first action. It came swift and furious like the whirlwind.

The royal rapier would have pierced the heart of Orleans had he not by a good play warded off the thrust. The King uncovered himself as he drew back, but Louis did not follow up the advantage which was now his.

"Fool! cried Charles. "This is no play at the academy. It is life or death," and again he came at Louis with all the fury of a wounded gladiator.

Orleans was obliged to fall back. The King was his match, and his swordplay was wonderful. He forced Louis across the floor by the fierceness of his battling. Blood was already on the carpet, both the King's and Louis'.

"Swear by the missal and live!" shouted the King. "Swear to your innocence on the holy words, or die the traitor Paris is now calling you."

"I take no oaths," shot back Orleans. "I am thy brother, but not the coward of the family."

The next instant Charles came at his adversary with the fury of a jungle tiger. He knocked the Prince's rapier aside, and then ran him thru with clinched teeth and merciless mien.

A silent figure lay at the King's feet. Charles reeled back to his chair, from which he stared in silence at his work.

Ten minutes passed. The marble clock on the heavy mantel struck the hour, and a little bird came out and sang its song. The King did not move.

All at once, after another stillness, he tapped the gold bell on the table. After this he crossed the room and unlocked the door, but stood there rapier in hand. Heavy feet ran down the corridor without.

"Ho, 'tis you, Ruy?" Charles exclaimed, at sight of the burly man who appeared. "Come in."

The menial did so, but fell back at sight of the limp form on the floor.

"Take him away," commanded Charles.

"'Tis the Prince! My God——"

"Take him away," repeated the King, turning upon Ruy with the rapier. "One less traitor to France. Down the back stair at once. You know the little cell at the end of the underground passage? Leave him there with his God, if he ever worshiped one. Go!"

The King's voice ended strangely, and as the man stooped to lift Orleans, Charles tumbled back into his chair and chattered like a magpie. The old fit had come. The King of France was mad again.

The continuation of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

Evil of Parties.

"I think a party should be avoided at any cost," observed Wadding. "I would give Gertrude her choice between a bicycle and a party, and I'm sure that, like a good, sensible girl, she will take the bicycle and forego the party. Most girls would make such a choice, and it is better so for everybody.

"Parties are rough on the furniture and they are rough on the kids. Now look at that last party. Jennie Gigglins broke a plate——"

"But," interrupted Mrs. Wadding, "Jennie Gigglins wasn't invited to the party. She ought not to count. Her sister was invited, and she just came along with her sister."

"Well, you want to figure on younger sisters being brought along and breaking plates. There's little Willie Neepance, he nearly put his eye out at the last party Gertrude had."

"Well, Willie is so heedless. He struck his eye stooping to get the ball that you know perfectly well they were throwing at the valentines."

"Yes, well, you must always expect boys to be heedless and put their eyes out. Another girl tore her stockings and she was a sight when she went home. I know it made her parents our enemies to have her coming home from a party at our house looking as if she had been thru the siege of Mafeking.

"Parents object to getting their children banged up that way and they hold us responsible for all the injuries received at our house. Then there was the little girl who went home crying. That looks awful, to see little girls leaving our house precipitately and running home with a grievance."

"But Johnny Swattle tore her hair ribbons off."

"Well, you should look forward to nothing better than Johnny Swattle's tearing the girls' hair ribbons off and sending them bawling to their mothers. The mas expected us to protect their dears from such attacks. And didn't little Amy have her clothes nearly torn off playing 'I spy'?

"I tell you, parties are bad for the people who go to them and for the people who give them, and it is especially hard on the furniture, and the guests know that fact as well as the hosts. It is hard enough for grown people to keep from breaking and scuffling the furniture, much less children. For my part, I never go to your brother's house to dine, but what I fear I will get myself into serious trouble over putting my feet on his mahogany table."

"Your feet on the table!" gasped Mrs. Wadding.

"Yes. There is the most comfortable foot rest you ever saw projecting from the pedestal of your brother's dining table. But I can't get my feet on it without making a grating noise which arouses suspicion and gets me in bad. But no man can resist it. It is fate. That's the real reason why I avoid dinner parties at your brother's house if I possibly can."

* * *

Stopped Suddenly.

"What I admire most in a man," said Mr. Johnson, "is the power of self-denial. Now, take smoking," he continued, lazily filling his pipe, and gazing around at the rest of the party grouped in front of the log fire. "It's a useless habit, and yet not one of you men here could give it up. You haven't got the strength of mind."

This remark roused some indignation, and members of the party were reminded of incidents that proved a contrary idea. Finally a Southerner remarked:

"I knew a feller down in Kentucky, who smoked tew ounces of terbaccer every day for twenty-seven years, and then guv it up at a minnit's notice and never touched it again.

"Fact, gentlemen, I dew assure ye," he resumed, as a murmur of unbelief arose. "He was jest lightin' his pipe when somethin' cum to him, an' from that day to this he's never smoked another."

"Marvelous instance of will power," said a listener.

"Extraordinary strength of mind," said another.

"What determination!" exclaimed a third.

And then Uncle Sam spoke again, gazing meditatively into the fire the while.

"Yes, it were strange," he said. "Great friend o' mine, too; so I know it's true. He were sitting on the top of a barrel o' blasting powder at the time, and the head o' his match dropped thru the bunghole."

* * *

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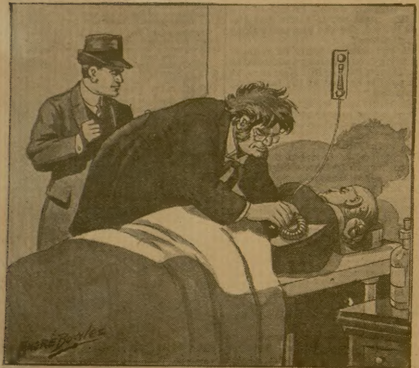

"Snap on that electric key."

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CHAPTER XVII.

SO THAT was the great secret, Cope?" ventured Callahan. "I've always suspected that it was something along that line. No wonder you're interested. Won't you explain why——"

The chief stopped abruptly. Perhaps he was afraid of treading on Jarrick's toes. As for Billy, he remained absolutely silent, for he saw now that his story had touched a raw spot on the man across from him. Copelin Jarrick, however, made no reply at first. But after a short pause he withdrew his lower lip, which had been making a well-defined ledge on the underside of his face.

"Yes," he admitted slowly. "I didn't think that somebody would walk in under the tape ahead of me. But perhaps they have, perhaps they have." He stopped, his face looking as tho he were lost in a great maze of gloomy reflections. "Yes, that was my big secret, chief," he went on. "But I tell you this much: My own machine—and it's not even perfected yet—is already large enough to fill a trunk. So if this Michaux has condensed his invention into a satchel of the size described by McClintock, he's struck a brand new principle—and it's neither chemistry, electricity, nor magnetism." He turned to Billy. "You say there was a peculiar stare on Mrs. Hunter's face—after she died?"

"Yes, a mighty peculiar one. Her eyes—and I don't think I'll forget them for a long time to come—were wide open and even slightly protruding. Does that go along with a case of plain heart failure?"

"No," grunted Jarrick, "it doesn't by a long shot—unless it was a case of Z-ray heart failure. And by the great horn spoon, it had better not be that, either!" He seemed to be getting peevish again. He stood up and seized a rusty brown hat with an enormously high crown. "Chief, I'm going to look into this affair instead of wasting my time here. A dead dog, a dead woman, a dead man, a machine that deflects a magnetic needle wandering from point to point, and a mysterious fire in a building whose rent—according to the story told McClintock by the night police officer—was paid by the owner of an invention and model shop in the rear, are enough to hold any man's attention, for a while. And whatever I find I'll let you know." He turned to Billy. "And now can you go over the ground with me—to the morgue and to your own room especially? Or have you got other things to attend to?"

"I'll trot along with you gladly," replied Billy, thinking sadly of Carolle's actions of the evening before and their peculiar hidden connection with Victor Michaux, who held the secret of the whole thing. He rose. "Any help or information I can give you I'll be confoundedly glad to give."

"Good enough, then," said Jarrick, rubbing a pair of wrinkled hands together and leading the way to the office door. "We'll see—we'll soon see—well, we'll see what we shall see." And with this cryptic utterance he stamped out of the door without even going thru the formality of saying good-by to Callahan.

The latter, however, made no comment, only motioning with his head toward the door. So Billy followed Jarrick into the outer corridor, and down the long flight of stairs to the lower floor. The older man led the way to the street. Then, without any conversation at all, they threaded their way thru the bustling, jostling downtown crowds until they reached the first car line. But at the curbing Jarrick turned to Billy and spoke for the first time since leaving Chief Callahan's office:

"I beg your pardon if I'm a little abstracted, Mr. McClintock. But you've got me mightily interested. Now, the undertaker, I believe, who has your aunt's body is Gordon Smith, isn't he?"

"Yes. My friend, Doctor MacPherson, at the Devonshire, took care of that matter for me. Gordon Smith's place is on Clark street near North avenue."

"That's the first place we'll go, then. I want to check up on your honorable friend's diagnosis. It's possible, you know, that——" He glanced up. "But here's our car."

All the way northward on Clark street, however, Copelin Jarrick, true to his admission of abstraction, sat like a man in a dream, mechanically reading the advertising jingles in the car, but showing no inclination toward conversation. He arose to some sign of life when Billy tapped him on the shoulder at Maple street in order to point out the burned wreckage. And even as they looked from the window, they could see that Callahan's orders had already been put into effect, for the wreckage was roped off and a plain-clothes man with the star showing plainly on his vest, stood guard in front of it. From Elm street to North avenue was only a brief ride. There they dismounted and proceeded up the street toward the great gloomy establishment whose subtle influence seemed to pervade the whole block with the suggestion of death.

"Now our work begins," remarked Jarrick, enthusiastically. "I'm anxious to see more—or to learn more—about that stare on your aunt's face. Perhaps that's to be the pathological indication of death by this new ray. And then—perhaps not."

They were met in the undertaking establishment by a tall, solemn-looking man who recognized Billy's companion at once.

"If it isn't Mr. Copelin Jarrick!" he exclaimed. "Official business again?"

"Yes," grunted Jarrick. "Ran up here to have a look at the body of a Mrs. Matilda Hunter." He nodded toward Billy. "Mr. McClintock—Mrs. Hunter's nephew, Mr. Gordon Smith."

The latter bowed and led the way downstairs thru a labyrinth of narrow passages. He unlocked the door of a small room, and all three men stepped in.

On a slab at the center of the room, partly covered by a sheet, lay the body of Mrs. Hunter, dressed just as Billy had found it in his room less than twenty hours before. But he noticed with a slight feeling of relief that the eyelids were now closed. Jarrick, too, became cognizant of that fact in an instant, for he turned to Gordon Smith.

"The eyes, Smith. How were the eyes when she was brought in last night?"

"Enough to stare you out of countenance," returned the undertaker. "Must have been an unusual form of heart disease, yet that was exactly what Doctor MacPherson put on the certificate. He told me over the 'phone that she hadn't eaten for at least thirty minutes before she entered her nephew's room—so it had to be heart disease."

"Humph!" snorted Jarrick, stepping up to the body and removing the sheet. "And humph again. At least, gentlemen, one thing I'll give your mutual friend MacPherson credit for: He didn't slap down heart failure on that certificate because the death happened to be sudden. I can see now that he reasoned—slightly. To be candid with you, when I first heard MacPherson's statement I figured his medical knowledge wasn't worth a rap. He thought he reasoned, but he dropped into an error just the same. For he figured that it had to be heart failure because she hadn't taken anything in her stomach for thirty minutes." He turned and faced the other two. "What does MacPherson know about what went on in that room while you were gone, McClintock? I ask you that again. What does he know?"

Billy shook his head in bewilderment. It was evident that Copelin Jarrick was reasoning along some line which at present was rather obscure. Gordon Smith, too, appeared to be extremely puzzled by Jarrick's words, for he stood near the wall, scratching his chin reflectively and watching the proceedings with profound interest.

Without waiting for an answer to his query, Jarrick turned back to the woman's body. He opened a small handbag that still hung to her waist, dumping the contents out on the edge of the slab. They comprised, however, merely the stub of an indelible pencil, forty-three cents in change, and a key. He dropped the key in his pocket, replaced the other objects, and hooked the bag back to her belt. Then he lifted up her right hand and scrutinized it closely. On the ball of the thumb and the ball of the index finger the characteristic stain of an indelible pencil was plainly visible. He lowered her arm, and again fell to studying the body intently. But he seemed to be meeting an obstacle of some sort.

"Wouldn't have to be by the stomach necessarily," he said half aloud. "Of course not. But the suddenness of it—and that characteristic stare! Heart disease, eh? Z-ray?" His mutterings subsided for a few seconds. "Yes, gentlemen, it went straight and speedily to the nervous system, that's certain. And not by way of the stomach." He paused. "Not by the stomach. But did she move from the chair, tho? There's a vital question."

He stood immobile for a long minute.

"Smith," he said, turning to the undertaker, "get me a pair of scissors."

Gordon Smith fumbled in his coat pocket and produced a slender pair with a black cord, encased in a leather receptacle. Jarrick seized them without a word.

"Now, Smith," he directed, "help me to turn her over on her face. Step outside, McClintock, if things are a little too grewsome for you."

"I'll stay," said Billy, determined to see these new proceedings at all hazards.

With Mrs. Hunter's body completely turned over, Jarrick unsheathed the scissors and thrust the point carefully under the hem of the brown silk waist. Then, from the waist nearly to the neck, he snipped it open. This done, he followed the same procedure with the underlying garments, one by one. When he had finished he laid down the

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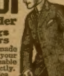

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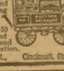

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scissors and drew the clothing slightly apart, a handful grasped by each hand. He started to peer carefully at the small area of the spine that was exposed, but almost immediately ejaculated:

"There—McClintock—Smith! There's the point which a certain—er—Z-ray selected to attack this woman. Can you see it?"

Both Gordon Smith and Billy stepped forward and looked down at the point which Jarrick, in the absence of any hands with which to motion, was trying to indicate by wagging his head. And there, about five inches down from her neck, was a small swelling about the size of a hazel nut, showing red and inflamed against the unnatural whiteness of the surrounding flesh.

"Yes," remarked Jarrick, calmly, "the insensate Z-ray picked out her spine and landed right in the region between the cervical and lumbar vertebrae." He relaxed his grip on the cut clothing and turned to the undertaker. "Smith, I dare say all this is Greek to you. But how soon can you get me the pipette and syringe apparatus? I've got to get a blood sample from this body. And something else I'd like to have." He gazed about the room and his eyes finally landed on a dusty electric fan that stood on a nearby wooden case. He pointed at it. "I can use the field magnets in that old fan, as well as that conducting cord and plug, if you'll give me permission. How about it, if I put 'em back into place?"

"Use anything you want on that old fan," replied Smith, his face still puzzled. "I intended to scrap it, anyway. As for the blood sample apparatus, I'll have it here in five minutes." He turned and left the room, closing the door behind him.

No sooner had he disappeared than Jarrick was lifting down the heavy electric fan. By means of a pocket tool containing, among other things, a small screw-driver, he quickly removed the two electric coils, which, with their soft iron cores, comprised the single pair of field magnets. He first twisted two of their terminals together; then he twisted the remaining ends to the bare copper terminals of the flexible conducting cord. In less than no time he had screwed the threaded plug into the wall socket, and snapped the key several times, the electro-magnets jumping together with a sharp click each time the circuit was completed.

He cut off the current, however, and laid the contrivance on the slab, next to Mrs. Hunter's body. Fumbling in his coat pocket, he produced a short length of stout steel wire, twisted in a loop around a lens of glass an inch thick. For a full minute he stared down with one eye thru the glass lens at the small protuberance to which he had just called the attention of Billy and Gordon Smith. And finally with a sigh he raised the pair of electro-magnets and pressed them forcibly down on the lump.

"Now, McClintock," he directed, "snap on that electric key. And hold it on till I tell you to turn it off."

Billy stepped to the plug switch and followed Jarrick's order. The latter allowed the surface of the electro-magnet to remain on the flesh for ten or twelve seconds. Then he raised it up and studied the smooth, slightly hollowed end.

"Eureka!" he cried. "Snap it off, McClintock. We've got it."

Billy immediately turned off the current and hurried over to where Jarrick was standing. But the latter, by means of two toothpicks held in his right hand like a pair of tweezers, had removed some tiny, almost infinitesimal, object from the face of the electro-magnet and was peering at it thru his magnifying glass. And finally he handed the glass to Billy without a word, and thrust forward the hand which gripped the two toothpicks.

"Take a look. Do you know what that is?"

Thru the thick lens Billy brought his attention to bear on the two toothpicks. The glass was of such magnifying power that he was startled for an instant, the toothpicks seeming to be almost as large as pencils. But, held securely between their ends, was a tiny, cylindrical fragment of metal which contained a hollow channel running entirely thru it. In fact, enlarged as it was, it resembled nothing so much as a miniature reproduction of a short piece of iron pipe. As he studied it, wondering what it was, he heard Jarrick's voice in his ear:

"It might surprise you a little—perhaps shock you as well—McClintock, but who was in the Devonshire last night when you left your room to go to the basement? Your aunt, Mrs. Matilda Hunter, never met her death from any such thing as a Z-ray. She was deliberately murdered."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"MURDERED!" ejaculated Billy, unbelievingly. He wondered if he had heard correctly. "Murdered, Mr. Jarrick? My aunt—Mrs. Hunter—deliberately killed by some one in the Devonshire? Are you certain? Is this——"

"Of course I'm certain," snapped back Jarrick. "As certain as I am that you and I are standing here discussing the matter. And I've got reason enough to be. Do you know what that tiny fragment of metal is that you just looked at?"

Billy shook his head.

"It's the end or tip of—well, I came near saying a hypodermic needle, for that was precisely the use that it was put to in this case. And in view of the rapidity with which this woman's death overtook her—plus that stare you described—I think that in four guesses I could tell you the exact name of the poison that was shot thru that tiny channel into her flesh; in other words, into her circulation. But that's neither here nor there. As I said once, that needle wasn't an ordinary hypodermic needle. The caliber of the tip seems to show that it was a particularly strong and stout one—and one that was intended to stand a thrust into its victim with terrific force. In fact, from the tiny piece we've got here, I should venture to term it an ordinary lumbar puncture needle." He stopped. "But you haven't answered my first question."

But Billy McClintock made no attempt to answer just yet, for his mind was in a complete whirl. He could not bring himself so soon to accept Jarrick's statement, in spite of the fact that the man, thru his line of obscure reasoning, had just uncovered a most unexpected detail. For who in the Devonshire would have done such a thing? And who in the Devonshire could have done the thing—at such a short notice? And what was that person's motive?

If it had not been for that most peculiar piece of evidence, the tiny, hollow metal fragment, he would have concluded at once that Copelin Jarrick, inflamed because another individual had been more successful than himself in inventing the fatal Z-ray machine, was desperately trying to delude himself into the belief that all the victims of it had met death from other causes. But even if his first statement were true, how could he explain away the death of the little poodle dog and of Michaux, each of which was connected most indissolubly with the black leather case? And another thought struck him with a strange chilling sensation: He himself was one of those who had been in the Devonshire last night. But who else had been there?

There had been MacPherson, whom he had called when he had discovered his aunt's body. There had been Lilywhite, the colored maid, who must have answered the telephone when Carolle rang up, and then pressed the buzzer calling him from his top floor room. According to MacPherson's remark, there had been her sweetheart, a black, bull-faced negro named Mose Zisco, about whom the boarders were always teasing her. Mr. Henry Jensen of the second floor rear, the newcomer who had been out of work for several weeks, had been home last night, for Billy had caught a glimpse of him on the way downstairs to the 'phone. Further than that he could not be sure. The landlady, Mrs. Tissenden, always went away after the big Sunday dinner; so, too, did the cook. And whether the transoms of the other rooms had been dark or light, he could not remember to save his life.

So he looked up at Jarrick.

"You've taken the breath out of me for fair, Mr. Jarrick, with your magnifying glass and your statement about my aunt's death. I tell you I can't quite grasp the significance of what you've said. And I can't be absolutely sure of who was in the Devonshire last night, beyond myself, Doctor MacPherson, Lilywhite—the colored maid—Mose Zisco—her Sunday night sweetheart, who works in a livery stable across the rear alley—and a Mr. Henry Jensen—a drug clerk apprentice, I believe—who has been out of work for several weeks."

"A drug clerk apprentice, eh?" grunted Jarrick. "Where was your landlady then? And the other employes?"

"Mrs. Tissenden has only the two employes, her cook and the house girl,

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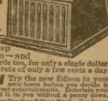

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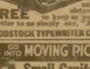

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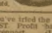

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Lilywhite. The cook is always off after Sunday dinner, and Mrs. Tissenden herself always leaves the place on Sunday afternoons and Sunday nights, on the plea that she has to give her nerves a rest from 'acute boardinghouseitis'."

Jarrick smiled, but rather grimly. "Well, it's pretty unsatisfactory to discuss that end of the matter at the present. But I'll say this to you: There was something mighty unusual going on in your boarding-house last night. What it was I certainly don't know. So it's up to us, I guess, to try to unravel it further. Gordon Smith will be back here in a second with the blood sampling apparatus. If you're not used to these things, I advise you to go upstairs and wait there for me—and to keep mum, of course. And as soon as I get what I want I'll be with you, and we'll strike out at once for the Devonshire. On the way I may clear up slightly what——"

The door opened and Mr. Gordon Smith entered, bearing a small contrivance of rubber and glass and metal, together with an empty stoppered bottle. He handed them to Jarrick and asked:

"Shall you need my help, Mr. Jarrick? I've got a business caller waiting upstairs for me; so if you could get along without——"

"Go right ahead, Smith. And take Mr. McClintock upstairs with you. He's decided not to remain for this little process. I'll be up myself in a few minutes, and if you're still busy I'll come back later in the day and explain all this business to you."

"Well, I certainly want to hear it," the undertaker replied, holding the door open for Billy.

He closed it quietly and stepped ahead of the younger man. After a walk replete with twists and turns and stairways, he led the way into a small reception-room. From there he stepped into his adjoining office, which faced on the street.

Billy waited in the gloomy reception-room for a full ten minutes. But he was no longer aware of the passage of time, for he was casting wildly about for some motive, any kind of a motive, that might be attributed to any of the mild-mannered Devonshire guests for attempting to plunge a poisoned hypodermic needle into Mrs. Hunter's spine. The whole thing seemed so diabolical, so bizarre, that now since he was removed from the influence of Copelin Jarrick's emphatic statements and actions, he began to feel in doubt about what he had just seen with his own eyes. But, granting that nothing other than a human brain could have selected such a point on a body in which to plunge a fatal instrument, and granting that nothing other than a human hand impelled by a strong arm could have sent the instrument inward with force enough so that its point snapped off against one of the vertebrae, how could that mysterious deflection of the magnetic needle be accounted for?

The affair suggested a story he had once read in which an astute detective had proved that the victim of a certain peculiar murder had met his fate thru a tiny poisoned dart which was blown from a tube by a dwarf savage. And it was supposed to have taken place in the heart of London! At the time he read it he had laughed the tale to scorn on account of its very unnaturalness, its extreme improbability. But was it any more improbable than this?

His thoughts now shot forth on a new trail. Was it possible that Mrs. Hunter had turned in her chair, and that the tiny fragment of metal, laden with some swiftly acting poison, had flown with terrific force from the black satchel? Indeed, that seemed possible. In fact, it was a most acceptable theory, except for the indisputable fact that the whole leather surface of the black case was smooth and unmarred by even so much as a pinhole, let alone an aperture from which a tiny metal cylinder could have been mechanically projected. No, if the thing had entered her body, it had done so by means of the energy of a human hand. That was certain.

But how had the wielder of the needle known that the black case contained that most desirable contrivance, the Michaux Z-ray machine? For he must have entered the room in order to steal the invention, satchel and all. And yet—what had gone wrong with his plans? For the satchel was still in the same place on the bureau when he, Billy McClintock, returned and found Mrs. Hunter dead. And, again, the very picture of a person stealthily entering the room brought to mind a peculiar fact—the door of his room squeaked so loudly when it was opened that no one could enter it without the occupant knowing it.

He had just decided to give up the whole thing as too much for him, when Jarrick, hat on his head, walked into the tiny reception-room. With his two hands he was wrapping up the glass bottle in a piece of newspaper. He glanced thru the glass panel of the adjoining door at Gordon Smith, who was still in consultation with some one at his desk. Then he gave a quick nod toward the street and led the way outside.

Apparently, however, he had nothing to add to his original statement. In fact, after Billy rejoined him he offered no more explanations whatever, and as they started out to the Devonshire he seemed to be lost in his own speculations, almost oblivious to his companion. But after they were nearing Scott street Billy broached the possibility of the metal tip having been mechanically propelled from the black satchel. The older man, tho, only snorted:

"Then there was a brain in that satchel, my young friend. A brain that counted down to your aunt's seventh vertebra—and then let fly. But I'm wondering how much anatomical knowledge that brain had. Did it decide to take a chance on passing in between two of the vertebrae? Or did it, in its own ignorance, blindly proceed in the attempt to accomplish something that there wasn't a one-in-ten chance of accomplishing?"

To this last query Billy had no reply. But as they struck up Scott street, the two graystone pillars of the Devonshire showing plainly a half block ahead of them, he said:

"Assuming that what you say is true, Mr. Jarrick, you'll have to admit this: Even tho the needle didn't pass clear into my aunt's spinal cord, the passage of it into the outlying flesh accomplished somebody's purpose, didn't it? The facts alone show that. And so, on top of that, I'd like to ask: Are there any poisons that can act instantaneously on the human body? And, if not, why did she remain sitting where she was after she felt such an agonizing pain in her back?"

"The answer to your first question is—yes. The answer to your second is—no. There are no poisons that act instantaneously—except in fiction. I'm not going to drop into a dissertation on toxicology at this point, but I will say that if one of a certain four poisons gets into a person's circulation, the effect would be so close to instantaneous that the second hand of one's watch would be required to measure the actual time between cause and effect. And that practically answers your third question, altho I may add this statement: The more velocity—but not force, necessarily—behind an instrument or missile, the less pain to its victim. Many an individual has sat down on an upright sewing needle—and never known it until years afterward when it began to work out of their body at some other point." Jarrick glanced up. "But here we are at the Devonshire, I see. I'm glad of it, for I frankly admit that I'm not ready yet for either explanations—or answering questions."

Billy fumbled for his latchkey and asked:

"Do you want to go straight to my room—or do you first want to get a look at these different people who were in here last night? Lilywhite distributes the clean towels about five-thirty every afternoon, including Sunday, and on account of that she can tell you the names of those who were in their rooms last night just as darkness came on."

"Capital!" commented Jarrick. "I'll interview her, then, first of all. But before that, however, I'd like to meet Doctor MacPherson and talk the case over with him. Will you knock at his door and—er—introduce me?"

CHAPTER XIX.

ONCE inside the hall, Billy tapped lightly on the doctor's door. But he obtained no response. So he knocked louder. After several unsuccessful attempts, he ushered Jarrick into the spacious back parlor which had been fitted up as a reception-room for the guests of the Devonshire. Then he made his way downstairs to the kitchen, where he found Mrs. Tissenden bustling about with Lilywhite.

Here he drew his landlady to one side of the room, and in a low voice told her that his aunt's death in the Devonshire the preceding evening had turned out to be not a simple case of heart failure, after all. But it wasn't necessary for him to intimate that something in the case pointed to the possibility of some one in the Devonshire having had a hand in it. In fact, the very instant that he told her that Mr. Copelin Jarrick of the Chicago detective bureau was upstairs and wanted to talk to Lilywhite, the good lady turned pale and dropped the dish in her hand to the floor, where it shattered in a dozen fragments.

"Oh!" she wailed softly, "such—such notoriety—to come to this respectable place! Oh, this is dreadful, Mr. McClintock. I can't understand it."

"Neither can any one else, for that matter," he said briefly. "But this Mr. Jarrick is upstairs waiting. He wants to question Lilywhite, and he wants to see this fellow Zisco who comes to see her on Sunday nights. And do you know where Doctor MacPherson is?"

Mrs. Tissenden was breathing heavily now. "I'll have Lilywhite upstairs in a few seconds. And I'll call for Mose from the barn across the alley. Oh, such a dreadful thing to happen here! I should have stayed home yesterday afternoon. I was hoping to sell out the place this winter." In her agitation she wiped her greasy hands on her clean shirtwaist. "Go right upstairs, Mr. McClintock—and I'll be up at once." But as he turned away, she added: "As for the doctor, he left the house an hour ago to lecture at an X-ray clinic in the Cook County Hospital. He won't be back until late today, so he said."

Billy returned to Jarrick in the reception parlor, and told him briefly what Mrs. Tissenden had just said concerning MacPherson's whereabouts. Within a minute or so, Mrs. Tissenden and Lilywhite came up together from the basement, the latter wiping her hands nervously on her apron, her chocolate-colored eyes staring wide in amazement at such unusual proceedings in that hitherto prosaic boarding-house. Jarrick looked her over carefully from head to foot. Then he asked:

"Your name is Lilywhite, I believe? And you have a friend named Mose Zisco, if I'm not mistaken?"

"Yassuh," she said, in a scared voice. "Lilywhite Johnson's my name. An'—my fren'—Mistah Zisco—I done sen' fo' him across de alley. You-all don' 'spec' we done nothin' wrong, do you, sah?"

"Not necessarily," Jarrick returned, watching her eyes keenly. "But there's something connected with the death of Mr. McClintock's aunt here last night that isn't—well, it isn't according to Hoyle." Lilywhite's black face never altered a muscle. "When you took around the clean towels last evening, whom did you find in their rooms? And what time was this?"

"Ah remembah dat ah finished 'stributin' de clean towels at about ha'-past five. An' sh'tly aftah I ansahs de do' an' lets in de lady w'at afterwards wuz

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—wuz—daid." She shivered slightly.

"Finished at five-thirty, did you? And Mrs. Hunter reached here at six o'clock, according to Mr. McClintock. I see. But how about my first question, Miss Johnson? Whom did you find in the rooms?"

"Well, sah, I can tell you dat wifout no trouble, nohow. Evvybody seem to ha' been gone away yestiddy, 'count of it bein' such a nice day fo' de lateness of de year, I reckon. I wuz in evvy room in de place, an' dey wuz only Mistah McClintock, Doctoh MacPherson, and dat new fellow on de second flo' rear——" In doubt she turned to Mrs. Tissenden.

"Mr. Henry Jensen," that lady prompted. "The drug clerk apprentice."

"Yassuh, Mr. Jensen."

"Very well," Jarrick remarked, gazing out of the window dreamily. "Do you remember that darkness comes on at this time of the year shortly after five o'clock? If any one had been sitting in his or her room with the lights snapped off, would you have known of that person's presence?"

The colored girl laughed easily. "I'se givin' you de facts when I says I knowed evvy one who wuz in dey room. In evvy room dat wuz dahk, I done snap on de 'lectric lights in o'dah to fin' bof de dirty face towels an' baf towels."

"Good! That limits it, then, to five possibilities."

At this juncture Billy made a hasty count on his fingers, but with a decidedly benumbing feeling he discovered that the only method by which five people could be considered to have been in the Devonshire the previous evening was by including one—William T. McClintock. The discovery didn't please him.

After a pause, Jarrick asked of the girl:

"Where were you before you distributed the clean towels? Just about dusk?"

"Ah—ah—wuz settin' in de back yahd talkin' to Mistah Zisco, sah."

"And you left him there, didn't you, while you distributed the towels? And when you let Mrs. Hunter in?"

She nodded, plainly frightened at the trend of the questioning.

"Was he still there when you got back to the yard? If so, how long did you continue talking to him?"

"He—he—was still dah each time. An' I talked wid him till de tellyphone bell rang. I got back in de house to ansah it. Ah foun' dat it wuz fo' Mistah McClintock, an' ah pressed de buzzah fo' his room."

Jarrick pointed his finger at her and glared thru his tilted, steel-rimmed spectacles.

"And where were you after you pressed the buzzer? During the next ten minutes or so? Answer me truthfully, now."

Her mouth opened several times, and she seemed to be swallowing with difficulty.

"Ah—ah—done happened to remembah dat w'en I 'stributed de clean towels at ha'-past five, ah dumped over de big pile of linen in de linen closet. Ah wuz feared dat Mrs. Tissenden w'at runs dis hyer boardin'-house would come home sooner dan I tinked, an' so ah went back to de linen closet in de front of de basement an' straightened out all dem scattered sheets and towels."

"So you didn't see your friend, Mr. Zisco, for the next ten minutes, eh?" said Jarrick, slowly. "Left him sitting alone in the back yard? And the back yard connects with the first floor?"

"Yassuh," she stammered. "Ah lef' him by hisself, an——"

Her words, however, were cut short by the entrance into the reception parlor of a tall, slim, yellow-skinned negro of about 25. He swaggered insolently thru the doorway in a pair of squeaky, light tan shoes, his hands sunk deep in the pockets of a checked suit, a glassy pin in his red necktie reflecting the sunlight clear across the room.

"Ah unnahstan's you-all wishes to see me about somepin," he said bumptiously.

"Yes," said Jarrick. "Sit down. Your name is——"

"Mistah Zisco—Mose Zisco, at your sarvice."

The negro dropped luxuriously into one of the great plush chairs. Jarrick crossed to the door, closed it, and took up a standing position close by.

"Yes," he said abstractedly. "You were visiting Miss Lilywhite Johnson last night, I believe?"

"Mebbe I was, mebbe I wasn't. Can't see as it makes no diffunce what I was doin', do it?"

"Enough of that!" roared Jarrick, his gray hair bristling with rage, his very limbs and arms trembling violently. He threw back his coat, and the gleam of a regulation detective badge shone forth. "You answer me civilly, my man, or——"

"Mose," broke in Lilywhite, hurriedly, "ansah de gemmun all w'at he asks. Dey's been trouble in dis house. But he—he ain't gon' do yo' no hahm."

The flashily dressed negro, however, had become an altogether different person, now that he had caught a glimpse of the badge of the police authorities. Was it some guilty knowledge that had worked the sudden change in his demeanor, Billy wondered, or was it merely the remembrance of his arrest in some former crap game, perhaps, that had instilled in him such a wholesome fear of the police? At any rate, he stammered:

"Ah—ah—Miss Lilywhite an' me was visitin' in two chaihs in de back yahd last evenin'. She git up to ansah de telyphome, an' say somepin about bein' gone fo' ten minutes to straighten out de linen closet befo' de missus git home. An'—an'—she leave me settin' dar all alone. Do dat ansah yo' question, boss?"

Jarrick turned to Lilywhite.

"And was he sitting there when you got back from arranging the contents of that linen closet?" he asked.

She looked down at the floor and started to give forth some sort of an answer. But Jarrick stepped forward and roughly grasped her woolly head in his hands, tilting it forcibly upward so that her scared eyes were compelled to gaze straight into his own.

"The truth now. No lies."

"Ah—ah—ah——" she said feebly.

"Fo' Gahd, sah," broke in Zisco, excitedly, rising to his feet, "ah knows now w'at you-all's drivin' at! You 'spec's dat gal of mine o' knowin' somepin 'bout de lady w'at die upstayahs. She don'——" He stopped, for Jarrick was paying no attention to him.

"Was Mose still there in the chair," the latter said firmly, "when you got back to the yard?"

"W'at dat got to do wif it?" Zisco asked hurriedly. He glanced fearfully at his colored sweetheart. She was stubbornly refusing to answer. "Ah'll ansah yo' question mahself. No, ah wuzn't in de back yahd w'en she come back."

Jarrick spun around and faced him. "Where were you, then, in the meantime?" he persisted.

The negro boy wet his lips nervously with his tongue. "Ah wuz thinkin' ah'd go into a crap game aftah ah leave Lilywhite fo' de evenin'." A lengthy pause followed. He wet his lips again. "An' ah remembah dat ah leave my lucky payah o' dice under mah mattress ovah above de libery stable. So ah sneaks back 'cross de alley to regain dem bones. An' dat's de truf," he finished sullenly

"Very well," Jarrick commented. "I've got one more question to put to you, Mose. And don't bother to lie about it, because I sized up your eyes the minute you entered the room. And here's the question: Do you sniff it?" The negro stiffened up. "Or do you use a rod?"

"'Fo' Gahd, sah, ah ain't took a blow o' snow fo' two yeahs. Ah ain't——"

"I missed the bull's-eye on the cocaine suggestion, I see. How long since you had a jolt of morph, Mose?"

The negro said nothing for a minute. Then he answered sulkily: "Dis mohnin'."

"Pull up your left sleeve," commanded Jarrick, "and let me see how long you've been at it."

Without a word Zisco tugged at the checked cloth of his left sleeve, and slowly drew it up. Billy leaned forward from his chair in his eagerness to learn what Jarrick was driving at. So, too, did Mrs. Tissenden. From her position at Jarrick's elbow, Lilywhite watched the performance with amazement. And finally the negro sullenly [illegible] up his arm for Jarrick's inspection.

Even from where he sat, Billy could see that the man's black forearm was scarred from wrist to elbow with the tiny white skin abrasions made by a hypodermic needle.

Further chapters of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

* * *

THE MAN AND THE WOMAN.

[illegible]

[illegible] to murmur [illegible]
[illegible] love me, [illegible]

[illegible]

* * *

A Real Beauty.

Two farmers, attired in corduroys and gaiters, were strolling thru a picture gallery, where they looked, and apparently felt, decidedly out of place. But at last they brought up before a picture which really seemed to please them—a portrait of a lovely girl with a particularly ugly bulldog.

"This is something nice, Dick," said one.

"What is it called?"

Dick referred to the catalog.

"'Beauty and the Beast,'" he said.

The other man looked closer at the bulldog.

"Ah," he sighed appreciatively, "he is a beauty, too!"

* * *

Looked Lazy.

A traveling man was eating in a stuffy little restaurant one very hot summer day. There were no screens at the windows or the door. The proprietress herself waited on her customers and shooed flies from the table at the same time. Her energetic but vain efforts attracted the attention and roused the sympathy of the traveling man, who said:

"Would it not be better to have your windows and the door screened?"

"Well, yes, I s'pose that would help some," replied the woman, after thinking a moment, "but 'twould look mighty lazylike."

* * *

Serious.

Two neighbors had a long litigation about a small spring, which they both claimed. The judge, wearied out with the case, at last said:

"What is the use of making so much fuss about a little water?"

"Your honor will see the serious nature of the case," replied one of the lawyers, "when I inform you that the parties are both milkmen."

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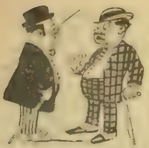


Jones—"How is your business?"

Sport [illegible] born [illegible] every thirty [illegible]

Did Not Hesitate.

A young lady entered a book store and inquired of the gentlemanly [illegible] married man, by the way [illegible] book suitable for an old gentleman who had been married fifty years.

Without the least hesitation [illegible] reached for a copy of [illegible] "A Half Century of Conflict."

What She Thought.

[illegible] young man. For [illegible] had been paying her [illegible] had not yet even squeezed [illegible]

[illegible] as they lingered in the [illegible] by her gate [illegible]

[illegible] you might [illegible] [illegible] and if I placed [illegible] fair hand tonight when I [illegible]

[illegible] wanted pleading [illegible] head coyly [illegible] lifted her face tempting [illegible] and replied:

"[illegible] George, I should think it [illegible] out of place."

■

Rubbing It In.

"The audacity of this laundress!"

"How now?"

"After reducing my garments to shreds, she tries to charge me by the piece."

⁂

Neglected Discussion.

"There's one good thing about the [illegible]"

"What is it?"

"We don't hear so much about the high cost of living as we used to."

Breaking It Gently.

In Liverpool there is a man famous for his calmness on every occasion. One day he strolled leisurely into the office of a friend.

"I've just had a chat with your wife," he began.

"Why, I didn't know she was in town."

"Oh, she wasn't in town," replied the other. "I called at your house."

"I didn't know she was receiving today," said the husband, with some surprise. "I thought she had a headache."

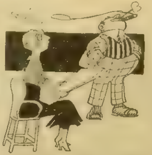
"She didn't mention it to me," said the calm man. "There was quite a crowd at the house."

"A crowd?" echoed the husband.

"Yes," went on the calm man. "They came with the fire engine."

"The fire engine!" gasped the husband.

"Oh, it's all right," went on the calm man. "It's all out now. It wasn't much of a fire, but I thought you'd like to know of it."



Wife (reading)—"Man in Georgia swaps his wife for a mule! Would you swap me for a mule, John?"

Husband—"No, Jane, I wouldn't. I'm used to you and I ain't to mules."

Easily Explained.

At a recent social affair the subject of marriage came up for discussion.

"Speaking of marriage," remarked one of the woman guests, "I could never quite understand one of the biblical references to it."

"To which one do you particularly refer, Mrs. Jones?" asked another of the guests.

"About marrying in Heaven," answered Mrs. Jones, thoughtfully. "Why do you suppose there is no marrying nor giving in marriage in Heaven?"

"That's an easy one!" promptly chipped in a sarcastic matron. "I don't suppose there is a man in the place."

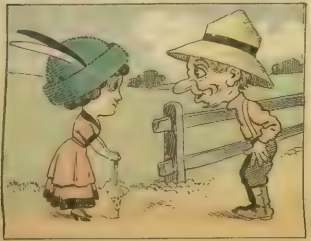
A Good Foil.

"She gets plenty of invitations to house parties and the like."

"Yes, and she is so homely that every girl who sees her wants her to come and spend a week or two."

LINEAL DESCENDANTS.

The folks next door will be my death,
  Late hours they keep;
Must be descended from Macbeth
  Who murdered sleep.



The Summer Maid—"City people don't buy gold bricks, you know."

The Farmer—"No, they jes' keep pikin' along, buyin' melons an' such that look good on the outside."

Why They Were Cold.

In his Savannah camp Bill Donovan, baseball manager, had a dusky-hued waiter at the hotel by the name of Sutton. Bill had to reproach Sutton more than once for a lack of agility in arriving with the food. Sutton promised to improve. One morning he brought in a consignment of griddle cakes that had gone cold.

"What do [illegible]" said Bill, "by bringing me in cold cakes?"

"Well, I'll tell you, boss," said Sutton. "I brung them cakes [illegible] for you that I guess they [illegible]"

Restaurant Episode.

Why didn't you interfere when the cook chased the waiter with a cleaver and the waitress yelled murder?

I thought it was an ordinary cabaret feature. I couldn't understand what the waitress was yelling. I thought she [illegible]

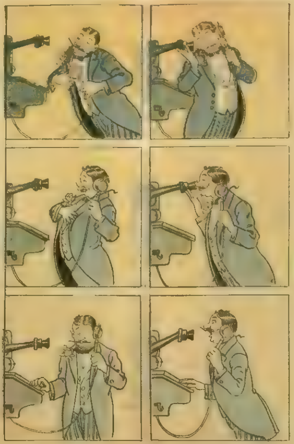
Her Idea.

They were discussing the new house.

"How about the sash?" asked the architect.

"Oh, something in baby blue," spoke up the young [illegible]

THE PROPOSAL BY TELEPHONE



Treating as the Enemy.

A captain of hussars gave a dinner to the men of his squadron the night before they left for the front.

"Now, my lads," he said, "treat this dinner as you will the enemy." And they set to with a will.

After dinner he discovered one of the men stowing away bottles of champagne into a bag and, highly indignant, he demanded to know what he meant by such conduct.

"I'm only obeying orders, sir," said the man.

"Obeying orders!" roared the captain. "What do you mean, sir?"

"You told us to treat the dinner like the enemy, sir. Those we don't kill we take prisoners."

Some Doubt.

"I hear you are going to give a big dinner dance," chirped the society reporter.

"I don't know whether I am or not," said Mrs. Flubdub. "Nobody seems to want to come, the cook threatens to leave if I do, and my husband is making bad talk about the expense."

Going Them One Better.

Several farmers were sitting around the cracker barrel in the country store, telling how the potato pests had got into their crops. Said one:

"Them pests ate my whole crop in two weeks."

Then another spoke up.

"They ate my crop in two days, and then sat around on the trees and waited for me to plant more."

Here a sales agent for a seed house broke in:

"Well, boys," he said, "that may be so, but I'll tell you what I saw in our own warehouse. I saw four or five beetles examining the books about a week before planting time to see who had bought seed."

Guessing the Proverb.

The kindly old squire was giving a little treat to the village school children. After tea he stepped on to the platform and announced, with a beam [illegible]

"Now I am going to perform certain actions and you must guess what proverb they represent. The boy or girl who succeeds first will receive a quarter."

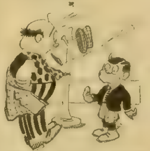
That did it. Instantly every eye was fixed on him.

First of all, the old gentleman lay down on the platform. Then one man came forward and tried in vain to lift him. Two others came to his aid and between them they raised the squire, who was rather portly.

The actions were meant to represent the motto "Union is strength." When they had finished the squire stepped forward and asked if any child had solved the puzzle.

At once a grubby hand shot up and an eager voice squeaked:

"Let sleeping dogs lie."



Employer—"Did you see a half-dollar lying on my desk, Jimmie?"

Office Boy—"Yes, sir, here it is. I took it for safe keeping."

Employer—"For safe keeping?"

Office Boy—"Yes, sir; your wife was in while you was out."

A Fashionable Color.

"Ma wants a package of dye and she wants a fashionable color," said the little girl to a druggist.

"A fashionable color!" echoed the pharmacist. "What does she want it for, eggs or clothes?"

"Well," replied the girl, "the doctor says ma has stomach trouble and ought to diet. And ma says if she has to dye it she might as well dye it a fashionable color."

His Mistaken Idea.

Mr. Justcott—"Why, what are you crying about, dear?"

Mrs. Justcott—"Oh, George! The mice have got into the pantry and eaten up a beautiful custard pie I made myself!"

Mr. Justcott—"There, there! Don't cry over a few little mice!"

The Woodchuck's Laugh.

[illegible] reading a fake animal story to the attentive editor, said [illegible]

Whereupon the woodchuck laughed softly to himself.

"Ah," remarked the editor, "I suppose he indulged in a woodchuckle."

All Over.

"No more [illegible] his footsteps [illegible] walk just as the [illegible] eight."

"Gracious, Jeanette!"

"And [illegible] old parlor [illegible] for him [illegible]"

"You don't [illegible]"

[illegible]

"But why [illegible] him?"

"Discard him! Why [illegible] I am going to marry him."

A Vagrant Thought.

"I was just thinking about that longevity record established by Methuselah."

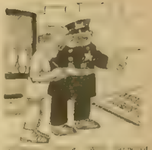
"What about it?"

"If he hadn't set such a high mark maybe more men would go after it."

The Real Cause.

Wiggs—"What causes divorce?"

Wagg—"Men, women and marriage."



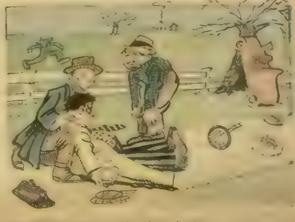
[illegible] this fellow.

Policeman—"He climbed up [illegible] 'Safety First' sign to see what it [illegible] and the blooming sign fell on him."

Fish Stories.

Mrs. Flatbush—"Your husband said that since the purchase of Alaska [illegible] the United States [illegible] waters have [illegible] fishery products valued at more than $[illegible]"

Mrs. B[illegible] when it comes to talking about fish I won't believe [illegible]



Doctor—"Can't you move either of your legs?"

Injured Motorist—"Certainly not! If I could I'd be kicking myself for buying the car!"

Something Low.

"How's the temperature in your town? Pretty low, isn't it?" said the New York City man.

"Low!" came from the upstate citizen. "It's low enough to be within the reach of all."

Overdoing It.

"You should try to look on the hopeful and pleasant side of life."

"That's what I have been doing. I got this terrible cold plowing [illegible] a snowdrift in the woods so [illegible] on hand to hear [illegible]"

Why He Was for the Allies.

"Why are you for the Allies?" a friend asked a solemn looking individual [illegible] looked as if there had been much suffering in his life. "Is it because you abhor Prussian militarism?"

"No."

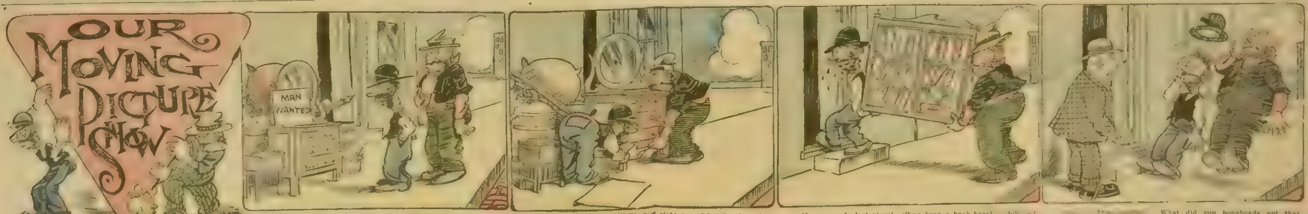
"Is it that you fear Germany's desire to expand and absorb foreign lands? Is it that you dislike the German character?"

"[illegible]," replied the solemn [illegible]

"Well, why are you for the Allies?"

"Because," said the other with a [illegible] "I once ate [illegible] sauerkraut."

OH, WHAT A PAIN!



Dreamy Dan—"Say, Rusty, here's a chanst to make some coin! See that sign, 'Man Wanted'? Well, we'll put dat stuff in the house in no time. Of course, that's what they want done."

Rusty—"Sure thing! We'll start right in an' by the time the guy gits back we'll be ready to collect de money. Grab holt there!"

Here goes de last piece! She's been a back breakin' job, but dere comes de owner now! We'll soon have our money.

Thu[illegible] What did you boneheads put that [illegible]k into the house for? I wanted a man to help put it into [illegible] Carry the stuff out and put it where you found it, and then get out of here!

A Special Delivery

By C. T. Jordan

THE clatter of the electrically driven canceling machine suddenly ceased, and simultaneously the office went dark.

"Wires down!" exclaimed Jerry Dunscombe, the gray-eyed young special delivery messenger who, to kill time, had been shooting the remnants of the outgoing mail thru the stamper for Porter, the night dispatching clerk. "Strike a match, Dick."

In a moment three shaky-flamed gas jets were alight, and Jerry finished canceling the letters with a hand-stamp. At the dispatching case Porter drew the cardboard shade closer to his eyes, to shut out the weird, cavorting shadows cast by each object the flickering lights encountered. "Whew, it must be raging!"

"I'd give a dollar if I could draw a blank in the eleven-twenty!" Jerry remarked. "But it'll never be my luck."

Dalfield, a western manufacturing center, sitting with its hundred thousand souls astraddle the Candle River, was experiencing such a storm as only a wind-torn winter night can concoct. Every few years the Candle became a sullen torrent of violent, destruction-dealing deviltry; all this December day the downpour had been unceasing, and tonight——

The storm swept in thru the open back door at eleven when the expressman, who hauled the mail between depot and postoffice, called for the last outgoing. Porter tied out a light mail, for the mounted night collector, due at ten-thirty, had not yet arrived. "Don't worry about the eleven-twenty incoming," warned the expressman. "While the wires were working, hours ago, it was reported over an hour late."

He departed, and at eleven-fifty the night collector returned afoot. After a rest in a tie-sack lined package tray he told them of his narrow escape across the river when, driving full-tilt down the Burns street hill the heavy wooden wagon bridge had been whisked from its supports as is an autumn leaf from a tree. "The other wagon bridges were down, too, and I was stalled on the other side," he stated.

"Then how in thunder did you get back?" queried Jerry.

"I tried to telephone, but couldn't, so I stabled the mare with some folks I know, and set out for the river with the sack on my back. There's a steel footbridge at the back of the Templeton place. The river bed's wide there, and the bridge is a high one. It was standing, only it was a foot or more under water. But it held firm. I grabbed tight to the rail, holding my mail sack high with the other hand, and succeeded in wading across finally, tho I tell you——"

A loud knock at the back door interrupted him. Jerry glanced up at the clock, which registered quarter of one. It was the expressman again. He tossed in the overdue eleven-twenty, and shaking himself like a spaniel left the office to re-enter the storm

There was one first-class pouch. Porter unlocked it and a second later emptied it on the tray table by the canceling machine.

Jerry sprang up and began pawing over the bundles, sharply scrutinizing the outside letter of each bunch. The fourth he picked up bore one of the unwelcome, long, blue special stamps. It's destination was about a block from the postoffice. "If only they'd all be that easy," he murmured. "But a wet night's the night for a chase," he added gloomily.

He found a second one, this side of the river, but more than a mile from the office. Only a few more bundles remained to be gone over, and Jerry went about the task gingerly, hoping he had already found the last "speedy." Porter picked up the final package of letters.

"Here's a special, Jerry," he announced. "Lord, what a chase!" He paused and drew it from under the string. "'One-twenty-three Riverside avenue.' Why, Jerry! That's the other side of the river!"

"Good night!" ejaculated Jerry, taking it from him.

"You surely aren't going to take that one along?" asked Porter, when he had O. K.'d Dunscombe's entry of the specials in his book.

"Why not?" cross-questioned the speedy man.

"You don't mean you're going to attempt to make the delivery?" Porter queried incredulously.

"Of course I'm going to make the delivery. What am I hired for? To take out the easy ones and let the chases slide?"

"But in this case——"

"This case is no different than any other, that I can see," said Dunscombe, stoutly.

"But the river's impassable. There's no need of your making a fool of yourself. Nobody expects you to accomplish an impossibility. That letter's of no importance, anyway. Take my advice and leave it here. You'll have trouble enough getting to Doc Brown's."

"Do you see that blue ten-cent stamp?" asked Jerry, holding up the letter in question. "That stamp entitles the letter to delivery at the earliest moment possible after its arrival at this office, important or not, and I get my eight cents for making the delivery. You expect me to leave it here till morning?"

"But it's folly to try to get there tonight. You simply can't do it."

But Dunscombe had hastened to his locker and was drawing on his black gum hip boots. A minute later he reappeared in a long suit of oilskin, his little brown bag slung over his shoulder. Dropping the three speedies into it he started for the door. "So-long, Dick," he called.

"Wait a minute," cried Porter, thinking to dissuade him.

Dunscombe gave him time to ask one question:

"How in thunderation do you expect to get to the other side of the river, Jerry?"

"I can swim if necessary," replied the special carrier. "But I don't think I'll have to. Berker got across with the collection all right, and I guess if he could do it I can. Well, so-long." And before Porter could say another word he had opened the door, sidled thru and slammed it shut again.

"The kid's got spunk, and no mistake," observed the night collector, from his resting-place on the tie-sacks. "No use trying to stop a fellow of his caliber, Dick. But he's doing a mighty rash thing tonight!"

Into a night as black and wet as ink plunged Jerry Dunscombe. Out on the slippery cement walk to the street he [illegible], and there he encountered the wind in its full fury. A gale was swaying at its will the shadowy outlines of a few tall trees. He took out his electric torch, pressed the button, and angrily repocketed it. The battery was dead

The rain came down in slanting parallel sheets blankets— and he crouched and shoved his [illegible] it to the corner. Only one [illegible] field like his own back yard would dare venture out tonight.

Up Turton avenue, on which the structure that housed the postoffice faced, he fought his way, clinging close to the almost invisible buildings that he might not go astray this early on his trip.

It took ten minutes, perhaps fifteen, to cover the block that lay between the postoffice and the destination of the first special in his bag. It was an apartment house, and he was an age finding the entrance.

Five minutes he waited in the outer hallway, lighted by a single low-turned gas jet, for a reply from Apartment Four. Then the inner glass door was opened a few inches and a tousled head of hair surmounting a sleepy pair of eyes appeared in the aperture.

"Who is it? What do you want?" asked a drowsy feminine voice, its owner shivering in her hastily drawn on kimono.

"Special delivery for Mrs. Clay Van Housen," replied Jerry, receipt book in hand.

"What! A special letter for me at this hour!" Her voice grew more distinct, as she opened the door wider. Holding her kimono tightly with one hand, she stepped out and took Dunscombe's indelible pencil.

"Yes, ma'am. Sign here, please." He passed the book to her and watched her unsteady hand scrawl the signature.

"Any charges?" she asked, handing the book back and scrutinizing sharply the handwriting on the letter he brought from his pouch.

"No'm. The Government pays me. Good night. Hope it isn't any bad news." Tipping his dripping rubber helmet, he backed out.

Into the storm again. How it was blowing! No let-up. He almost lost his footing, but grasped the banister in time to save himself from a nasty tumble down the slick cement steps. Once more he was on the sidewalk, clinging close to the shelter of the buildings.

A narrow, forked tongue of ghastly flame zigzagged its way thru the heavens and exposed an uprooted ornamental tree stretched directly across his path. "A good thing I saw that," he muttered, as he stooped and felt his way across the obstacle.

Approximately a mile of uncertain traveling lay ahead. He must next visit the residence of Dr. Alfred Brown, in the upper part of the city. He knew the place well, for he had delivered more than one speedy there. But tonight he knew the going would be tough.

He struggled along at snail-like pace, not daring to hurry for fear of running afoul of some fresh unseen danger. If trees were down in the main avenues, what might not be expected in the less sheltered residence district?

Jerry, tho he could not see the face of his watch, calculated that the time must be about 2 a. m. when he turned into what he knew by some subtle sixth sense was Hazard street; and he encouraged himself with the knowledge that he was on the last leg of the trip to Doctor Brown's. But even when he had reached the doctor's place there would

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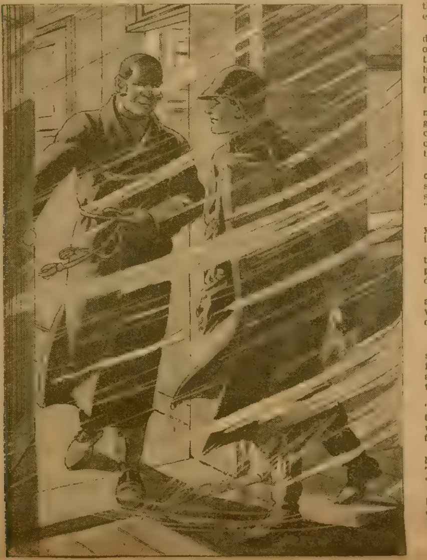
remain the letter addressed to the house across the river

How would he ever cross? He had scoffed at the idea of that undertaking's impossibility before leaving the office, but now—now that he was out in the full bitterness of it—he didn't exactly scoff

The low picket fence that fronted the doctor's place he could not find until he got to his knees and crawled over it It lay flattened to the ground. He stood up and waded down the swift-moving little stream that had transformed the gravel walk into a creek. He found the steps, and, worn and tired, slowly mounted them He lifted the brass lion's-head knocker and gave three staccato raps with it. A light appeared, the front door was drawn inward, and a bearded man in a bathrobe pulled him inside and banged it shut behind.



"What, you again!"

"Well, well, young man!" said the bluff old doctor, when he had Jerry seated in his office and the gas heater turned on. "You out tonight! Another plagued special for me, I suppose. But you needn't have come with it. The morning would have done."

"Against the regulations," said Jerry, warming his rain-bleached hands "Yours isn't the only one."

"You've more to deliver yet tonight?"

"One," answered Dunscombe. "Sign here, please. I've got to be moving."

"Not till I've mixed you a hot drink," said Doctor Brown, signing his name rapidly. The wet purple lead ran over the leaf as if it were ink from a leaky pen. "What will it be?"

"Nothing, thanks. No; not even as medicine. I'm on duty."

Seeing that he was wasting time the doctor desisted and instead: "Gad, what a night!" he commented. "Luckily, I haven't had a call. I half suspect it's because the telephone's out of order, but I'm not going to be inquisitive on that point. It would take something mighty serious to get me out, let me tell you. But there's little chance of any one coming for me, with the going so hard so I'm not going to worry. Well, if you must go. Where does your next letter take you?"

"Riverside avenue," replied Jerry, dropping his receipt book into the pouch. "I'm sorry I'm leaving so much water with you. I could just as well have waited on the porch."

"Riverside avenue!" ejaculated the physician "Why, that's across the river!

"Sure"

"But how will you get there? With the storm raging as it has been it will be the devil's own job. I don't see how the rotten bridges we pay taxes for can have stood the strain. It wouldn't surprise me in the least if they were all down."

"They are, Doctor. But good night. I've got to——"

"You're going to try to cross with the bridges washed away? Man! It's impossible! It would be more than a man's life was worth!"

But Dunscombe only smiled grimly and preceded the doctor to the door. Once again he was at the weather's mercy.

"It's a cinch I won't be able to get within a block of the footbridge Berker crossed," he pondered. "If it was a foot under water then, the Lord only knows how much now. No; I've got to figure out some other way. By George! I hadn't thought of that. The mail train was late tonight—an hour and a half but it got here.

"And that's the point: It got here! And it had to cross the Candle to get here. So it's a cinch that at quarter of one the railroad trestle was up. And I'll wager the twenty-four cents I'm earning tonight that it's still standing."

The trestle was a narrow, single-track one, high above the water, and chances were it had weathered the flood. It had never weakened in previous years, and Dalfield had been thru some severe storms. But even if it were standing, it was nothing but an eighth of a mile of redwood ties, with many hungry gaping spaces between them What chance had a person to cross in the dead of night, the drenching rains and sweeping winds in power as they were?

After a long, slow trudge Jerry reached the approach to the trestle, and carefully put his foot on the first slippery tie. Bending nearly double, to expose as little body-surface as possible to the head-on wind, he began the perilous journey across

The wind swayed him, and with difficulty he kept his balance The rain, making his puerile oilskins and canvas bag heavy as lead, tried to bear him down, but still he kept doggedly on

Once he thought all was over. His foot reached forward, down—and failed to encounter a tie. With a desperate backward movement of his shoulders he regained his equilibrium. Then, squatting cautiously, he felt with his hand for the tie. It was there, but a little farther away than the others had been—spread a little. He got to his feet and went on with doubled prudence

His foot pressed something yielding and he realized that the trestle was crossed. Emboldened by the feel of the ground under him, he made for Riverside avenue.

In places he went thru water knee-deep, but at last he came to the steps of a house and mounted them. He knew this must be 123, for it was the only house on this side of the one-hundred-block. He fumbled for the doorbell—found it.

Jerry straightened up. His eyes were now on a level with the lace-curtained glass panel of the door, and he discerned a pale glimmer thru it. Obviously a light was burning in the rear of the house

Tho almost deafened by the roaring of the elements, he distinguished the sounds of footsteps inside the hall. A second later a woman's voice called: "Who's there?"

"Special delivery carrier!" Jerry yelled hoarsely, knowing how difficult it would be for one inside to hear

A bolt rattled and the door was thrown open. "Come in, please, sir," pleaded a delicate little woman, fully dressed, a lamp in her hand

Dunscombe was suddenly taken aback at her appearance. Her countenance was haggard; she was under the stress of some deep emotion

"Something wrong?" he hesitated.

"Come to the kitchen, please," she said dazedly. "My husband, Mr. Meyers, fainted at supper, and I haven't been able to revive him. Can't you do something?"

Jerry realized that the stress on that "you" was unreasonable, but he realized, too, that she was half out of her head with anxiety, and was not responsible for what she might say or do.

"Unconscious this long? Haven't you had a doctor?" Then he remembered. The telephone was not working tonight. "The neighbors?"

She seemed not to hear him, but led him by the arm to the kitchen, where, on the lounge she had managed to drag him to, lay a man of about 40.

"I'm afraid it may be a stroke," she said, lifting her big brown eyes to him. "I did everything I could think of. But nothing seemed to do any good. I tried and tried to telephone, but could not even get Central. I dared not leave him alone more than a minute, and I knew I could never get to a neighbor's house in this storm. The nearest one lives a quarter of a mile away. I shouted from the porch, but couldn't attract attention. I put a lamp in the front window early, but it did no good. It burned out a few minutes ago. Oh, what shall I do!"

By now Jerry had entirely forgotten the fact that he was a special delivery carrier in the Government's employ. His entire mind was on this frail woman's predicament. What, indeed, had there been for her to do? Had she ventured out this night, he doubted if she could have gone far. Husky, in rugged health as he was, Dunscombe himself was exhausted almost to prostration. What had there been for her to do? What was to be done, now that he was here?

"A doctor, of course," the answer came to him in a flash. But where could a doctor be found? He asked her if there was one on her side of the river. She knew of none. Whom could he persuade to attempt the trip across the Candle?

"Doctor Brown's the nearest one," came the thought. But would he come Hadn't he said that very evening that it was more than a man's life was worth to cross the river in this storm? Confronted with that very problem—a man's life in the balance—would he be willing to make the attempt—to leave the comforts of indoors and brave the storm?

"He'll have to!" said Jerry, grinding his teeth, his mind made up on the instant. "I'm going for a doctor, Mrs. Meyers, and I'll see that he gets here. Keep a stiff upper lip, and don't worry."

She did not attempt to reply, but got down on her knees beside the lounge, and lifted a pair of eyes that hoped

Barely a half-hour later Dunscombe stumbled up the steps of Doctor Brown's

(Continued on Page 17.)

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks [illegible] in this condition until extreme old age [illegible] has been used for years, and hun[illegible] it and are more than delighted with the results [illegible] us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have [illegible] at any drug store at a very small cost Do not [illegible] but write at once Box 491, Blairsville, Pa

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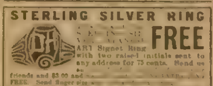
Dept. 706, 515 S. Franklin St., Chicago



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Classified Want Ads

Classified Want Ad Information

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W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500 N. Dearborn St. CHICAGO, ILL.

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS: AMAZING, NEW INVENTION. Marvelous Adding Machine, retailing at $ 50 Adds, subtracts and multiplies. Does work of $200 machine. Immense profit. Offices, stores and factories buy from one to a dozen. Five year guarantee. Every demonstration sells. Write quick for pro [illegible] Dept. E. 100, Calculator [illegible] Rapids, Mich

AGENTS—MAKE REAL MONEY THIS [illegible] not "paper money." Sell [illegible] luminous articles. "They shin [illegible] rucifixes, Match Boxes, Bulbs (for Switch Plates, Clocks, Startling! [illegible] Mysterious! Pioneer Corporation [illegible] inous Specialists), 1258 West 63rd, [illegible]

MEN AND WOMEN CAN EARN $20.00 TO $40.00 per month during spare time by distributing our Free Order Books No selling. No canvassing. No money or [illegible] needed. Sample Order Book Free. Write to day. Kenmore Mfg. Co., 333 Bromide Bld. Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS—HERE'S THE BEST LINE OF food flavors, perfumes, soaps, toilet preparations, etc., ever offered. No capital ne [illegible] Complete outfits furnished free to w [illegible] Write today for full particulars. American Products Co., 4381 Third St., Cincinnati, O.

WE START YOU IN BUSINESS, FURNISHing everything; men and women, $20.00 to $200.00 weekly operating our "New System Specialty Candy Factories," home anywher. Opportunity lifetime [illegible] let free [illegible] dale Co., East Orange, N. J.

WOULD $150 MONTHLY AS GENERAL agent for $100,000 corporation, and a Ford auto of your own, free, introducing Stock and Poultry remedies, Dips, Disinfectants, etc., interest you? Then address Royoleum Co-Operative Mfg. Co., Dept. A, Monticello, Ind.

WILL $120 MONTHLY WITH AUTOMObile furnished free interest you? Then become agent or district manager for our guaranteed auto necessities. Tremendous sellers. Remarkable money makers. I. W. Rayburn Co., 181 N. Dearborn, Chicago.

AMAZING, STARTLING, SENSATIONAL, stupendous, new, guaranteed, easy insurance protection plan. Hustling agent 18 to 60 wanted in each locality to represent big sick and accident company. W. G. Critchlow, Dept. 2718, Covington, Ky.

1916's SENSATION! 11-PIECE TOILET ARticle set selling like blazes at $1, with $1 carving set free! Whirlwind stunt! Newcome made $18 one day! Write M. Pierce Co., 906 Lake St., Chicago.

AGENTS—500% PROFIT; GOLD AND SILver sign letters for store and office windows. Any one can put on. Write today for free sample. Metallic Letter Co., 416 N. Clark, Chicago.

FAST SELLING "KANTLEAK" RAINCOAT proposition. Cooper earned $60 in 5 days. Bridge $88 in 6 days. We deliver and collect. New 1916 swatches free. Write today. Comer Mfg. Co., 400 White St., Dayton, Ohio.

LARGE MANUFACTURER WANTS REPREsentatives to sell shirts, underwear, hosiery, dresses, waists, skirts, direct to homes. Write for free samples Madison Mills, 586 Broadway, New York City.

AGENTS: GRAB THIS 25c HOUSEHOLD [illegible] lightning seller. One agent [illegible] day. Working sample 12c. [illegible] Particulars free. G. L. Erwin, Manufacturer, 2113 W. Harrison St., Chicago.

YOUNG MAN, WOULD YOU ACCEPT A tailormade suit just for showing it to your friends? Then write Banner Tailoring Co., Dept. 331, Chicago, and get beautiful samples, styles and a wonderful offer.

100 PENNY STICKS, OUR DELICIOUS Spearmint Gum given free to advertise. Send dime for postage. Stewart Bros., Addison, N. [illegible]

AGENTS—I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME THAT'S a dandy. New stuff; 100% profits. Sample and full layout free. Write quick. Lacassian Co., Dept. 21, St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS—GREATEST AGENTS' SELLER ever produced; 200 to 500 per cent profit Monroe Mfg. Co., X 96, La Crosse, Wis.

YOU CAN SELL OUR RAINCOATS. BIG commissions, free coat to good agents Temple Raincoat Co., Templeton, Mass

REMNANT STORE, CINCINNATI, OHIO. Greatest dry goods bargains on earth. Agents and store keepers supplied.

$10.00 PER 1,000 ALLOWED DISTRIButing free Soap Samples. Pocket Soap Co. Lebanon, N. H

FEMALE AGENTS WANTED

LADY AGENTS: I HAVE PLEASANT, [illegible] work for one [illegible] or woman canvasser in each territory all or spare time. Money and experie [illegible] necessary. My agents are actually [illegible] $12.00 to $25.00 per week. If you mean business I will start you at my own expense A. M. Young, 100 Young's Bldg., Kalamazoo [illegible]

HELP WANTED

EMPLOYED PEOPLE INCREASE YOUR INcome $25 to $50 per month without interfering with regular work. No selling, [illegible] canvassing, no money or ex [illegible] Not work but fun. The Come-Packt [illegible] Dept. B, Toledo, Ohio.

THOUSANDS MEN AND WOMEN WANTED [illegible] S Government pos [illegible] month Steady [illegible] ficient. Wri [illegible] positions now [illegible] Dep't. J30, R [illegible]

WILL ADVANCE EXPENSES AND PAY [illegible] of $18.00 to m [illegible] ion and good [illegible] Philadelphia

S [illegible] FOR RELIABLE MAN OR WOMAN [illegible] Borax Powd [illegible] your town. No mo [illegible] B. W. Ward Co., 218 [illegible]

M [illegible] CHAUFFEURS [illegible]

HELP WANTED—(Continued)

BECOME DETECTIVES—EARN BIG money; easy work. Write Captain Wagner, 1243 Lexington Avenue, New York.

BE DETECTIVE; OPERATE OWN LOCALity or travel; experience unnecessary. J. B. Sturgill, Norton, Va.

WANTED—MEN—WOMEN. $75.00 MONTH. List Government Jobs open—free. Franklin Institute, Dep't. J28, Rochester, N. Y

MALE HELP WANTED

WANTED, MEN AND WOMEN TO QUALify for Government positions. Several thousand appointments to be made next few months. Full information about openings, how to prepare, etc., free. Write immediately for booklet. CG1034, Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C

ELECTRIC RAILWAY MOTORMEN, RAILroad Firemen, Brakemen, needed, every locality. Experience unnecessary. $70-$100 monthly. Write quick, stating position wanted. International Railway Bureau, 1416 International Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

FIREMEN AND BRAKEMEN: $100 MONTHly. Experience unnecessary Hundreds needed by the best railroads everywhere. Particulars free. 686 Railway Bureau, East St. Louis, Ill.

WANTED—RAILWAY MAIL CLERKS, Clerk-carriers, and Rural Carriers. I conducted Examinations. Trial Lesson Free. Write, Ozment, K, St. Louis, Mo.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, ALL RAILROADS; $120 monthly. Experience unnecessary. Railway Association, Dept. P-34, Brooklyn, New York.

I WILL START YOU EARNING $4 DAILY at home, silvering mirrors; free instructive booklet. G. F. Redmond, Dept. 400, Boston, Mass.

BE A DETECTIVE. EARN FROM $150.00 to $300.00 per month; travel over the world. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

BE A DETECTIVE; EARN $50-$100 WEEKly; travel over the world. Experience unnecessary. American Foreign Detective Institute, 115 Chemical, St. Louis.

GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS—THORough instruction, $5. Returned if not appointed. Particulars free. American Civil Service School, Washington, D. C.

BE AN AUTOMOBILE EXPERT IN SIX weeks. Our big book tells you how. Automobile Training School, 1052 Locust St., Kansas City, Mo.

$25. WEEKLY EARNED AT HOME MAKing Lighting specialty. Whole or spare time. No selling. Dept. 29, Sayres Co., Toledo.

WANTED—MEN, WOMEN. $75.00 MONTH. List Government jobs open, free. Franklin Institute, Dep't J 170, Rochester, N. Y.

GOVERNMENT FARMERS WANTED. $60 to $125 monthly. Free living quarters. Write Ozment, 68 F, St. Louis

FEMALE HELP WANTED

FREE TO ANY WOMAN, BEAUTIFUL 42-piece gold decorated dinner set for distributing only 3 doz. free cakes of Complexion Soap. No money or experience needed. B. W. Terrell Ward, 218 Institute Place, Chicago

FIVE BRIGHT, CAPABLE LADIES TO travel, demonstrate and sell [illegible] to $50 per week. Railroad fare paid. [illegible] rich Drug Company, Dept. 85, Om [illegible]

WOMEN TO SEW. MATERIAL PREPAID to your house. [illegible] No canvassing [illegible] for pri [illegible] Phila., Pa

WANTED—DUST CAPS MADE. SEND 2c [illegible] nt Company, 4704 Ellis Ave., Chicago

REPRESENTATIVES WANTED

REPRESENTATIVES WANTED. EVER [illegible]

TROUSER PRESSES

HEATLESS TROUSER PRESS—PRESS [illegible]

BASEBALL

WANTED. EVERY MAN AND BOY IN [illegible] Bldg., [illegible]

PHOTOGRAPHY

TENTH ROLL DEVELOPED FREE. WRITE Dorcas, 505 E. 63d St., Chicago

MISSOURI LAND

POOR MAN'S CHANCE—$5 MONTHLY buys 40 acres product [illegible] Carthage, [illegible]

INSECTS WANTED

SPEND SPARE TIME PROFITABLY gathering butterflies, millers Many wanted for Museums [illegible] Everybody [illegible] and 8 page f [illegible] Los Angeles, C [illegible]

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

SMALL INVESTORS MAKING FORTUNES from oil in Houston district. Single gusher wells pay thousands daily. Get interest with us in valuable properties; help develop for oil We want to drill ten wells in proven fields. Shares $10. Payments $1 monthly. Write. Maps and particulars free. Houston Oil Fields Ass'n, 1126 Carter Bldg., Houston, Texas.

OIL. $10.00 INVESTED WITH US HAS made others $300 in less than six months. Let us send you our magazine, "Profitable Investments," six months free, which tells how to make your money make you independent. The Hoffman Company, 407 Fannin Street, Houston, Texas.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services are offered here.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

$35.00 PROFIT NIGHTLY. SMALL CAPItal starts you. No experience needed. We teach you the business. Catalog free. Atlas Moving Picture Company, Franklin Building, Chicago.

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OLD COINS WANTED

WILL PAY $3.00 TO $10.00 FOR FLYING Eagle cent dated 1856. We pay cash premiums on all rare dimes, quarters, etc., and all rare coins to 1912. Thousands of coins and bills wanted. Send 4c for our Large Illustrated Coin Circular. May mean large profits to you. Numismatic Bank, Dept. 12, Fort Worth, Texas.

REAL ESTATE

TWENTY ACRES IN SAN JOAQUIN VALley, California, in fruits, vegetables, alfalfa with cows, pigs, poultry and bees will pay you steady, substantial profits. Delightful climate, rich soil, good, schools, churches, fine roads. Thrifty, hospitable neighbors. Write for free books. C. L. Seagraves, Gen. Colonization Agent, AT&SF Ry., 1929 Ry. Exch., Chicago.

REAL ESTATE PROPERTY FOR SALE

BEAUTIFUL SEASHORE HOMESITES ONLY $20. Special sale of lots at Alamo Beach, Texas, famous Bayshore resort. First 100 lots $20. Terms $1 cash, $1 monthly. Lots 50x140 feet. Splendid investment. Write for free literature and views. Alamo Beach Co., 421 First National Bank, Houston, Texas.

FARMS WANTED

WANTED: DESCRIPTION, PRICE, OF GOOD farm or fruit ranch for sale. O. O. Mattson, 15 Andrus Bldg., Minneapolis, Minn

WANTED—FARMS—HAVE 3,357 BUYERS; describe your unsold property. 746 Farmers' Exchange, Denver, Colo.

MISSOURI FARM LANDS

ATTENTION, HOMESEEKERS—IF YOU DEsire cheap land for homes or investment address Station A, Missouri Immigration Bureau, Springfield, Missouri.

PATENTS

"PATENTS AND PATENT POSSIBILITIES" is a 72 page treatise telling what to in- [illegible]

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE RETURNED [illegible] arch and report [illegible] invention [illegible] book [illegible] (Ninety pages) [illegible] Barrister Building,

WANTED, AN IDEA! WHO CAN THINK [illegible] Protect [illegible] Patent [illegible] Patent and [illegible] Patent Attorneys, [illegible]

PATENTS SECURED THROUGH CREDIT [illegible] Free search and [illegible] Book and list of patent buyers free. Wat[illegible]n & Co., 4276 Warder Bldg., Washington, D. C.

PROTECTIVE PATENTS PROCURED promptly, 104 pg. Blue Book free. T [illegible] cred. Robb & Robb, 248- [illegible] n, D. C.

THE PATENTOME IS FREE. AN EDUCA- [illegible]

PERSONAL

"FROM BALLROOM TO HELL," START [illegible]

HAVE SWEETHEARTS EVERYWHERE [illegible] ship 10c [illegible]

TWO STUNNING PICTURES OF FEMALE loveliness at bath, [illegible] Haute, Ind.

PERSONAL—(Continued)

WANTED AT ONCE, NAME AND ADDRESS of worthy single man, who would marry a refined, honorable lady of fine appearance, having considerable wealth who might assist her husband financially. For more complete particulars which will bring you one of the largest collections of photos of handsome, refined, and wealthy ladies, both maidens and widows, between the ages of 18 and 60, who claim to be worth all the way from $1,000 to $[illegible]000 and upwards, write me at once. Address Allen Ward, B520, Valley, Nebr.

MARRY NOW! UNPARALLELED OPPORtunities, prosperity sweeping country Thousands wish to marry. Speedy agreeable introductions arranged confidentially Free illustrated booklet mailed in plain, sealed envelope. Write now! Modern Bureau, 1921 Broadway, New York.

SUFFERERS FROM NERVOUS, WEAK, run down conditions should take Juven Pills They accomplish marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered Sent postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1. C. I. Hood Co., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, Lowell, Mass. (Z.R.)

DO YOU SUFFER FROM ANY OF THESE ailments: Dandruff, Falling Hair, Wrinkles, Pimples, Black Heads, Rough Skin, or Superfluous Hair? Our scientific formulas will positively relieve any of these afflictions or your money back. Satisfaction absolutely guaranteed. Write for free advice. DeCarris Company, 51 East 42d Street, New York.

ARE YOU LONESOME? JOIN FRIENDLY correspondence club for lonely people, young and old; not a matrimonial agency; your letter published free; send dime for magazine containing letters, names, addresses. The Social Review, Dept. W, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

WEAK, NERVOUS, RUN DOWN MEN; REmember we are specialists in chronic, nervous, blood, kidney, bladder and private diseases. Book symptom blank and advice free, sealed. Dr. Meyers, 316 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

WANTED—TO HEAR FROM LADIES WHO wish to marry gentlemen of education, holding responsible positions. Not a matrimonial bureau, but strictly private for refined people. State description and means, if any. W. Harvey, Box 268, Toledo, Ohio.

LOVERS, SEND ONLY 20 CENTS, FOR $1.75 packages Patented Lovine Sachet. Real thing. Guaranteed. Never fails. Union, Box 100, Palatine, Ill.

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE BEAUTY POSES. Extraordinary samples and other interesting matter 10c. Hoosier Co., Box B-553, Jasonville, Indiana.

MARRY RICH—BIG LIST OF DESCRIPtions and photos of congenial people with means FREE. Sealed. Either sex. Standard Cor. Club, Grayslake, Illinois.

MARRY — FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and description free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo.

SEX KNOWLEDGE MALE AND FEMALE described and illustrated, 276 pages. [illegible] sealed, 60c. Circular free. Reo Pub. Co., [illegible] Fulton St., New York.

WANTED—LADIES WITH SPARE TIME to introduce toilet preparations among friends. 100% profit. Danford, 504 East 63rd St., Chicago.

STOP TOBACCO WITHOUT HARMFUL drugging, quickly, secretly, inexpensively. Free booklet tells how. Hotex Remedy Company, Dept. A, Houston, Texas.

CATHOLICS WISHING TO MARRY AND wanting introductions, write. Booklet free. Catholic Correspondence Club, Grand Rapids, Mich.

LOVERS' PERFUME POWDER. SECRET and full directions, one dime. Scientific Extract Co., Akron, Ohio.

FORTY-EIGHT HIGH-KICKING GIRLS. Sensational Dancing, Etc., 10c. R. Glass, [illegible]

FUTURE FORETOLD—SEND DIME, BIRTHdate, stamped envelope, three questions. Mrs. Lane, 1116 Eighth, Des Moines, Ia.

EXCHANGE CARDS, LETTERS, PHOTOS with pretty girls; send 10c. Jolly Card Exchange, Decatur, Indiana.

MARRY—BIG PAPER WITH ALL NAMES, add [illegible] and photos, 25c. Box 2265B, [illegible] Mass.

FUTURE TOLD—10c BIRTHDATE, SATISfaction guaranteed. Florence Edwards, 305 [illegible] Salle St., Dept. A., Chicago.

GET MARRIED; LARGEST MATRIMONIAL magazine published. Mailed free. H. Jahn, [illegible] Paul, Minn

FUTURE AND PAST TOLD. SEND 10c and birth date James Smith, 326 Madison St., [illegible]

FROM BALLROOM TO HELL. A GREAT book. Startling truths re [illegible] Price [illegible] Enterprise, E-3348 Lowe Ave., Chicago

100 BATHING BEACH GIRLS, IN ASSORTED [illegible] itching poses, 10c. [illegible] Chicago.

WIDOW, 27, WORTH $40,000, WOULD MARRY. Box 584, Messenger, Los Angeles, [illegible]

GET MARRIED. BEST MATRIMONIAL PA [illegible]

DARE YOU ANSWER THIS—LONELY [illegible]

LONELY YOUNG WIDOW, WORTH $80,000, [illegible] care R. Hyde [illegible]

MATRIMONIALLY INCLINED? CORREspond. Names, add [illegible] sealed 12c. Henry Mal [illegible], Box 165 Chicago

10,000 MEMBERS WISH TO CORRESPOND [illegible] you. Membership 10c. Curtis Club, [illegible] ute, Indiana.

MY LADY BEAUTIFUL AT BATH. TWO [illegible]

CANCER NO KNIFE, PAIN. LUMPS IN [illegible]

A Special Delivery

(Continued From Page 15.)

house. The doctor came to the door almost immediately.

"What! You again!" he cried.

"You—you're needed, Doctor," faltered Jerry, his limbs trembling. "The—the other side of the river."

Doctor Brown drew a long breath. "You've crossed the Candle since you were here the other time?" His tone was one of amazement.

"Twice—going and coming."

"Afoot, of course?"

"Yes."

And replied the blustering old hardship-avoiding physician: "Come in and wait. I'll be ready in two minutes What's the matter, and how will I get there?"

"We'll go by way of the railroad trestle," said Jerry, sitting down near the heater. "I made it, but I had to go carefully. If you have any trouble maybe I can—carry—help—you—o——" His head sank forward on his chest in sheer "all-in-ness."

"It's a shame to do it," said the doctor a few minutes later, as, ready for the journey, he leaned over to waken the young speedy man.

"Tell me where the house is," he persuaded, as Jerry's eyes opened bewilderedly. "You stay here and sleep. I can make it alone if you did."

"But I promised her I'd see you there," said Dunscombe, trying hard to conquer his drowsiness, "and I'm going to keep my word. Besides," he stopped in amazement at thought of the negligence he had been guilty of—"I've got that special delivery to get rid of! I clean forgot it. I'd catch the mischief in the office if they knew it."

"Nonsense! It'll keep till morning. It's no more important than mine was, I'll wager."

"That's not the point," objected Jerry. "Are we ever going to start?"

The storm had subsided somewhat by six o'clock that morning, when Porter, the night dispatching clerk, went off duty. "Tell the superintendent when he gets here that the kid has been out all night," he said to the man who relieved him. "I'm afraid something's happened to him?"

The first incoming mail arrived at six-forty-five, as did the superintendent of delivery. "Where the mischief is that speedy boy?" he asked wrathfully of the day dispatching clerk. He had found a special delivery letter in the mail. The clerk repeated what Porter had told him.

"Hoh!" snorted the superintendent. "Can't tell me that kid had the grit. No! He went home and to bed. Thinks he'll put one over by delivering them this morning. But he can't do it! He'll suffer for trying."

The assistant postmaster came from the front office.

"That special messenger of ours appears to be a hero," he addressed the superintendent complacently. "Got Doctor Brown just in time to save the life of Meyers, the new postoffice inspector on this division. He delivered his last special and left for home. He may be a little late getting here, so don't call him down too strongly. Must have had a hard trip," and he started back.

"That special was probably of no importance any way," sneered the superintendent under his breath.

The assistant postmaster must have heard him, for he wheeled round

"No," he said deliberately. "Headquarters in San Francisco got wind of something wrong here. They filed a cipher telegram and it came as far as Forton, where the operator, knowing he couldn't get this vicinity by wire, had gumption enough to scent that it was important. He slipped it into an envelope and stuck a special delivery stamp on, managing to get it onto the last mail which, luckily, was late. Dunscombe let Mrs. Meyers sign for it, and when Doctor Brown revived the inspector he was able to transcribe the cipher

And when he had done so you can bet the doctor scampered for police headquarters. They made an early morning raid on our basement. It seems it was an anarchist plot, and if Dunscombe hadn't got that letter delivered the time-bombs, set for seven this morning when the whole force would be at work here, would have sent us all to Kingdom Come. No. That letter wasn't important!" He walked away.

The superintendent flushed with shame. He sat for a moment in silence, then abruptly got to his feet.

"That young fellow I guess is ready for promotion," he said. "Say, when he marries that little Miss Spangler we must get together and give them something nice as a wedding present."

* * *

UNREALITY.

A man may get a little way
[illegible]
[illegible] they say,
Much more than they deserve.
But soon or late events will move
And such a crisis bring
That to get by a man must prove
He is the real thing

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
And gives you what's your due.
And he who masquerades as steel
And is but straw or string
In shame is called on to reveal
He's not the real thing.

* * *

THE SAFETY VALVE.

"I hope," declared Muriel to some women friends who at a tearoom luncheon were discussing the question as to whether the woman of the future would be quite without domestic instincts, "that all these social reformers and domestic scientists are not going to take away housekeeping from the housekeeper and put it in the hands of specialists."

"It looks as if they would," declared a woman in gray. "I don't suppose the housekeeper of the future will dare say that her spoons are her own. They will belong to the trained polisher of silver, who will come in at regular intervals, tell her how to use her silver wisely and explain just how much of the precious metal is lost in cleaning. Other specialists will look after her rugs, her hangings and her clocks. So there will be nothing for her to do but use her possessions with discretion."

"Fiddlesticks!" exclaimed the woman next to the hostess. "There never will be a time when a housekeeper will not fuss around her house, doing things in her own way and according to her own sweet will."

"Really," said Muriel, "it would be a dangerous thing for me to lose my so-called domestic occupations, for they are my safety valves for all the emotionalism produced by lectures, musicales, and political meetings."

"A pleasant way to look upon your emotional experiences," said another woman. "Do you mean that you like to counteract the effect of a musicale with a broom or a duster?"

"Yes," declared Muriel. "I always feel toward music that 'I would not love thee, love, so much, loved I not my duster more.'"

"It has just the opposite effect on me," sighed the woman in gray. "When I come home from some delightful symphony concert and am obliged to go into the kitchen and make a prune pudding, I feel terribly let down."

"It all depends upon the pudding," declared another woman. "If it was a success I should feel that I was still among the clouds and the symphonies."

"Did you ever try a stepladder as an outlet for pent-up emotions?" asked Muriel. "It is always a great relief to me after returning from some morning lecture or recital to shake off my society clothes, put on an old house dress and climb to the top of my stepladder and wipe off the pictures or the molding. I am always sighing for a house into which dust cannot gain admission, but really without the everlasting chase life would lose half its spice

"Half its vinegar, you mean," declared a rebellious housekeeper. "I don't care to pass my life climbing ladders in search of dirt. That isn't what we are given brains and souls for."

"But I sometimes think," protested Muriel, "that trying for perfection in any line, even tho it be only in the dust-chasing line, develops the brain and disciplines the soul quite as much as do more so-called intellectual and spiritual pursuits. Only a housekeeper can experience that inner peace and harmony which come from a knowledge that her house is in order and her lamps trimmed."

"Nobody these days uses the kind of lamps that have to be trimmed," said the rebellious housekeeper. "But, of course, if you put housekeeping on such high grounds—on the stepladder, as it were—perhaps there is something to be said for it. Still, when I think of all the women who have been obliged to wear out their lives in useless drudgery, forever chasing and never banishing dirt, mending things that were not worth mending, making bread that could be bought cheaper and better at the baker's, I feel that we need a reform in housekeeping and that it is time the specialist and the reformer came to the housekeeper's aid."

"Well, when I think," declared Muriel, excitedly, "of the [illegible] women who have been saved from nervous breakdowns by their bread and their brooms, and how many have found an outlet for their feelings in their jelly making and preserving, I feel thankful for the noble art of housekeeping, and for what Charles Lamb has called 'the sweet charities of home.'"

"Dear me, Muriel," protested the rebel "I think you use your stepladder too much. It is hard to get you off it, so that you may come down to a sensible, earthly view of life."

"Hurrah for the stepladder!" cried Muriel, waving her napkin. "Long live the broom and the duster and all the other safety valves for the nervous housekeeper!"

* * *

Her Grievance.

If any one had asked Ned Lawton what he thought of married life he would have vowed that the past ten months had been the happiest he had ever spent. There had not been the faintest cloud to mar their happiness until yesterday

That morning, however, wifey came to breakfast in an unhappy, sullen mood. He questioned her unceasingly during the few minutes he could spare before running for his car as to the cause of the unusual and sudden change in her manner, but his solicitations were only met with a snappish answer.

That evening, however, Ned came home in a cheerful mood and was prepared to find his darling on the porch waiting for him joyously But he was doomed to disappointment, for she was in much the same mood as when he left in the morning.

Somewhat angered, he demanded an explanation of her behavior, to which she replied with a sob:

"Ned Lawton, if ever I dream again that you have kissed another woman, I'll never speak to you as long as I live."—Judge.

* * *

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Chicago Ledger

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1,250,000
COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Hope induces a man to do a lot of fool stunts.

Gallons of trouble may come out of a pint flask.

Half a loaf is better than the average ham sandwich.

A clever politician is one who is able to cover up his tracks.

The funniest thing about a stage comedian is his face.

The little word "if" blunts the point of many a sound argument.

The trouble with hitting the bottle is that it's apt to strike back.

Faint heart may win fair lady—with a little assistance on her part.

The absence of soft water is some men's excuse for drinking hard.

Bitter words may result from biting a persimmon before it is ripe.

More men are willing to say nothing than to amputate wood with a saw.

An overcrowded stomach is as unsatisfactory as a booze-addled brain.

A congenial husband is one who lets her have her own way in everything.

Lend a man a quarter today and he's apt to strike you for a dollar tomorrow.

Adam's apple was given to him to remind him of the time when he got it in the neck.

Even when a woman can speak with her eyes her tongue doesn't give them a chance.

There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and lip, but only one between a man and the sidewalk.

There isn't much self-love in the makeup of the man who loves his enemy as himself.

If a millionaire tells you that he was far happier when he earned a dollar a day, remind him of what David said in his haste.

In the contest for happiness it's a draw between the young girl with her first beau and the young mother with her first baby.

An Ohio couple kept their marriage a secret for six years and strange to say, the woman in the case wasn't a mute, at that.

Every time a man gets the best of a bargain he calls it cunning, but when the other fellow gets the best of it it's a barefaced swindle.

It pleases the average man more to have a woman tell him that he is the first man she ever loved than to have her tell him the truth.

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

Many of the present fashion features are a revival of [illegible] 70s.

The blouse with a frill at the center [illegible] side front is extremely smart.

Coats of the new spring suits are of varied lengths, some reaching only to the hips.

The hip girdle of a season or so ago is returning—that is to say, it has been seen upon some very new frocks, both for morning and afternoon wear. Indeed, one suit of light weight material displayed such a girdle in full messaline draped about the hips. The wide hip girdle is also occasionally worn with a washable separate skirt.

Among smart underwear are seen short drawers with a ruffle attached to a yoke and mounted on three rows of cording. Another ruffle goes around the lower edge and up the sides. The ruffles are starched to carry out the pannier effect of a gown. The newest corset covers have basques of lace or ruffles forming panniers on the sides. Silk voile is much used for lingerie.

❧

NEEDLEWORK NOTES.

Black mercerized crochet cotton is desirable to use when darning stockings instead of the usual mending cotton. It is stronger, easier to work with and makes neater-looking work than mending cotton.

Fine valenciennes insertion is now used as a substitute for beading on children's dresses. It is sewed in place at the top and bottom, and the ends left open and neatly overcast. Then ribbon is carefully drawn between the material and the lace—the latter really forming a casing for the ribbon. This idea is also used on lingerie and negligees for older women.

❧

HEALTH NOTES.

Take moderate daily exercise, such exercise as will briskly circulate the blood without fatiguing the body, and always preserve serenity and cheerfulness.

If you find it difficult to drink milk alone, take some bread or crackers with it. Either prevents the formation of large clots and the milk is therefore more readily digested. Lime water or barley water added to milk has the same effect.

Garters are, happily, being relegated to the errors of the past. It stands to reason that any tightening on such a busy and important part of the leg is dangerous, and many men and women owe varicose veins to the garters of their youth.

When the day is over and retiring time comes put your work and all that refers to it out of your mind. Sleep is so wonderful, so refreshing, and so health-giving we should regard it as a sort of treasure, and all of us need all the sleep we can get if we are going to be strong mentally and physically.

❧

RECIPES.

MEAT WITH HORSERADISH SAUCE—Boil a piece of tender beef. The sauce: Melt some butter in a saucepan, stir in some flour and add some of the broth you boiled the meat in. Then add about one cup of grated horseradish root, season with salt and sugar and at last a little milk. Have the sauce quite thick. Boiled potatoes and string beans are nice with it.

LEMON CUSTARD PUDDING.—Boil one pint of milk and pour it over three ounces of fine bread crumbs; cream one ounce of butter with two ounces sugar, add the beaten yolks of two eggs, and grated rind of a lemon, then gradually add the milk and crumbs; stir all together and pour into a buttered pan or dish. Bake one-half hour or until set, then beat the whites of the eggs to a stiff froth, with one ounce of sugar and a few drops of lemon juice. Pile roughly over the pudding; sift a little sugar over and then brown lightly in the oven.

❧

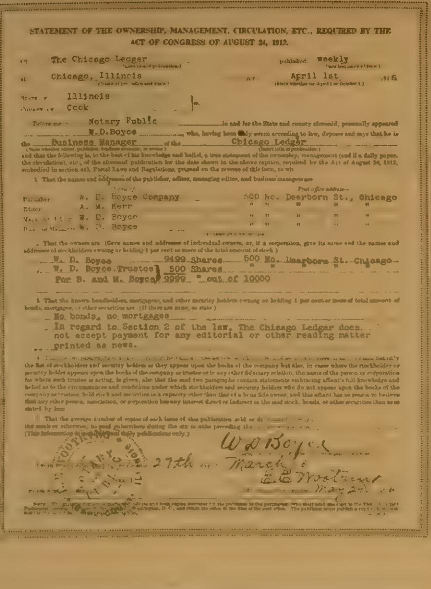
FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

The best remedy for rust on gas stoves is linseed oil rubbed on with a soft cloth. It also brightens the stove.

To wash hairbrushes mix together a tablespoonful of liquid ammonia and about a quart of water. Do not wet the back of the brush. Rinse in clear, cold water.

Clean the glass over pictures with a cloth wrung from hot water and dipped in alcohol. Polish them immediately until they are dry and glossy with chamois or tissue paper.

One milliner says that this is the way to clean a white straw hat so that it will be as good as new: Brush it thoroly with a clean brush, and then sponge it with benzine. One must be careful in using benzine, of course, as it is highly inflammable. The safest way is to use it in the open air.



STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912.

Of The Chicago Ledger published weekly
at Chicago, Illinois for April 1st, 1916

State of Illinois
County of Cook } ss.

Before me Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared W. D. Boyce, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the Chicago Ledger and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

	Name of	Post office address
Publisher	W. D. Boyce Company	500 No. Dearborn St., Chicago
Editor	A. M. Kerr	" " " " "
Managing Editor	W. D. Boyce	" " " " "
Business Managers	W. D. Boyce	" " " " "

2. That the owners are: (Give names and addresses of individual owners, or, if a corporation, give its name and the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of the total amount of stock.)

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For B. and M. Boyce } 9999 " out of 10000

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.)

No bonds, no mortgages
In regard to Section 2 of the law, The Chicago Ledger does not accept payment for any editorial or other reading matter printed as news.

4. [illegible] the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or di[illegible] the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the six months preceding the [illegible]
(This information is required from daily publications only.)

W. D. Boyce

[illegible] 27th day [illegible] March [illegible]

E. E. Wooltiner

[illegible] May 24 [illegible] 16

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The Fairy Corner

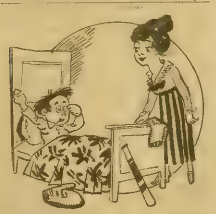
WHEN YOU'RE SICK.

What long, long, tiresome days those are when the worst of the measles, or scarlet fever, or tonsilitis, is over, and yet the doctor says: "No, not yet; you may sit up in bed all you like, but you must not get up till day after tomorrow."

"But, doctor," perhaps you plead, "I feel like skating or playing basket ball, and I could eat an elephant."

"All in good time—if you want to," replies the doctor, trying to be very stern.

Maybe you are so deaf from your sickness that you can't hear much reading aloud; or maybe there isn't any one to read to you. Then is the time for the "combination scrapbook." If you haven't a scrapbook with a number of blank pages, ask mother or somebody else to make you one out of stiff brown paper. Then get permission to cut up the advertising pages of all the magazines and catalogs they can give you.



His Ma—"What are you dreaming about, Willie?"

Little Willie—"Wonderin' how pop would look at the bat with three men on base and two strikes on him an' you in the gran' stan'."

Of course the outside of your house comes first—for it is the occupation of house building and furnishing you are about to engage in.

Select an advertisement of a house that you like, cut it out carefully and lay it in the first page of your book. Then search for an advertisement of trees and flower gardens and shrubs and rustic benches—anything to beautify the grounds about the house. Paste them in to suit your own ideas; if you have plenty of space it is well to use a double page for this purpose.

Now for the inside of the house; you can make as many rooms as you have pages and pictures to furnish them. You can easily find hall furniture advertised in pictures, as well as dining-room, parlor, library and kitchen. One youngster has even a butler's pantry fitted up! Then you may have a music-room, if you wish, a den, and anything else that occurs to you. On the second floor it is nice to have a cozy sitting-room, all the bedrooms you wish, and a bathroom. You will probably want a nursery, and perhaps a gymnasium on the top floor. Some of you may want only a cozy little house; others a large establishment.

Use your imagination, and make every room as artistic as you possibly can. Don't forget pictures on the walls, ornaments on the mantels, rugs on the floors, dishes in the dining-room (if you can find them) and curtains at the windows. The curtains are sometimes hard to find; but, if you have some of the lace paper which often comes in candy boxes, it is just the thing, and will make dainty curtains.

Now for the part that most boys will enjoy; the outbuildings. You can plan any number you please with the material you have. Be sure to have a good barn, where clean stalls for the horses can be arranged, and where your cows will be comfortably cared for. The chicken house will need attention, too (don't forget the incubator), and of course the dairy.

If you have crayons or paints and can color the scenery and bits of the house furnishings, it will be even more fun, and the result, if you are careful, will be the prettiest "paper doll house" you can imagine. Of course you may cut out your family too, and play with your portable house; but just the pleasure of making it is worth while One "grownup," at least, has passed many spare minutes doing this, and has had much pleasure from it.

*

CROOKED SPECTACLES.

An elf lived in a buttercup,
And, waking after dawn,
He donned his golden spectacles,
And stepped out on the lawn.
"Dear me," said he,
"I scarce can see,
The sunbeams shine so crookedly!"

He met a merry bumblebee
Within the clover gay,
Who buzzed "Good-morning!" in his ear,
"It is a pleasant day."
"Don't speak to me,
Sir Bumblebee,
Until you trim your wings!" cried he.

He met a gallant grasshopper,
And thus accosted him:
"Why don't you wear your green coat straight,
And look in better trim?
It frets me quite,
In such a plight,
To have you field-folk in my sight."

He saw an airy dragon-fly
Float o'er the meadow-rail:
"Pray stop, Sir Dragon-fly!" he cried;
"So upside down you sail,
The sight will make
My poor head ache;
Fly straight, or rest within the brake."

Then a wise owl, upon the tree,
Blinked his great, staring eye:
"To folk in crooked spectacles
The whole world looks awry
To-whit! to-whee!
To-whoo!" said he,
"Many such folk I've lived to see."

*

REPUTATION.

It is quite as uncomfortable to have a reputation for knowing that of which, in reality, you know nothing as to know a great deal and obtain no recognition of the fact from the stupid world.

A certain man who had a great reputation for knowing mathematics acquired it thru mere accident, and used to tell with great glee of how fate played the trick.

The man's name was Phelps, and upon one occasion he and Professor Newton, who, as every one knows, lived in a little private world of higher mathematics, took a walk. An obscure problem came up for discussion, and Mr. Phelps, who had small gift for mathematics, almost immediately lost the thread of the discourse and allowed his mind to drift into other channels.

He was called back to the subject in hand with a thud, however, when he heard Professor Newton say positively: "—which, you see, gives us X."

"Does it?" asked Mr. Phelps, politely and guiltily.

"Why, certainly. Don't you see?" cried Professor Newton, greatly alarmed at the idea that he might be mistaken. In his trained mind he ran back over the problem, and discovered an error.

"You were perfectly right, Mr. Phelps, perfectly," he cried, excitedly. "The result is Y, not X."

And all Mr. Phelps' protest could not convince the eminent professor that the man beside him was not an unappreciated mathematical genius.

"Why, he is the only man," Newton would say afterward, with a respectful light in his eyes, "who ever proved me mistaken."

*

HOMESICK CRABS.

Who would suppose that the humble crab had an instinct for home? "Once under the water, we might expect one part of the sea to be as homelike as another," says St. Nicholas, "but that shows how little the average human being understands the crab's point of view. Some one, however, suspected them of the homing instinct, and, catching a pair on the Yorkshire coast of England, marked them and carried them south fifty miles or more, returning first one and then the other to the water at different points. Then the crabbers carefully watched their traps on the lookout for the possible return of the wanderers. Strange to say, one day, not one, but both of the crabs were caught. They had made their way back to their Yorkshire home."

*

Trying It.

As the subject for their weekly essay, the schoolmaster asked his pupils to write what they would do if they had $5,000,000, says the Philadelphia Record.

At once all heads were bent save one and pens scratching busily. The one exception was little Willie. He calmly sat doing nothing, twiddling his fingers and watching the flies on the ceiling

At the end of the time the master collected the papers and Willie handed over a blank sheet.

"How's this, Willie?" asked the master. "Is this your essay? Why, all the others have written at least two sheets, while you do nothing!"

"Well," replied Willie, "that's what I would do if I were a millionaire!"

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I consider that plenty of iron in my blood is the secret of my great strength, power and endurance.

Jess Willard

SPECIAL NOTE.—Dr. E. Sauer, a well known physician who has studied widely in both this country and Europe, has been specially employed to make a thorough investigation into the real secret of the great strength, power and endurance of Jess Willard and the marvelous value of nuxated iron as a strength builder.

NEW YORK.—Upon being interviewed at his apartment in the Colonial Hotel, Mr. Willard said: "Yes, I have a chemist with me to study the value of different foods and products as to their power to produce great strength and endurance, both of which are so necessary in the prize ring. On his recommendation I have often taken nuxated iron and I have particularly advocated the free use of iron by all those who wish to obtain great [illegible] power. Without it I am sure that I should never have been able to whip Jack Johnson so completely and easily as I did, and while [illegible] my bout with Frank Moran, I [illegible] took nuxated iron, and I am certain that it was a most important factor in my winning so easily." Continuing Dr. S[illegible] said, "Mr. Willard's case is only [illegible] ds which I could cite from my [illegible] experience which proves conclusively the astonishing power of nuxated iron to restore strength and vitality in most complicated chronic conditions. [illegible] to me who [illegible] a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with the blood pressure of a boy of 20 and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact a young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret he said was taking iron—nuxated iron had filled him with renewed life. At 30 he was in bad health, at 46 careworn and nearly all in. Now at [illegible] a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth. As I have [illegible] a hundred times over, iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If people would only throw away patent medicines and nauseous concoctions and take simple nuxated iron, I am convinced that the lives of thousands of persons might be saved, who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, consumption, kidney, liver and heart trouble, etc. The real and true cause which started their diseases was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood. Iron is al[illegible] necessary to enable your blood to [illegible] food into living tissue. Without [illegible] matter how much or what you eat, [illegible] food merely passes through you without [illegible]. You don't get the [illegible] a consequence [illegible] pale and sickly looking just like a plant trying to g[illegible] soil deficient in iron. If [illegible] strong or well you ow[illegible] make the following test: [illegible] you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five grain tablets of [illegible] iron three times per d[illegible] two weeks. Then test your strength again and see for yourself how much you [illegible]. I have seen dozens of nervous run-down people who were ailing [illegible] the while, double their strength and endurance and entirely get rid [illegible] symptoms [illegible] troubles [illegible] time [illegible] had in some [illegible] for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated like nuxated iron if you want it to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless.

Many an athlete or prize fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray, while many another has gone to inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.—E. Sauer, M. D.

NOTE.—Nuxated Iron, recommended above by Dr. Sauer is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to [illegible] Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is [illegible] assimilated, does not injure the teeth, [illegible] them black, nor upset the stom[illegible] contrary, it is a most potent remedy, [illegible] nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as fo[illegible] run down condit[illegible] have such great [illegible] Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 200 per cent. or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed in this city by all good druggists.

Black Horse Ben

Or, Liberty's Lone Scout

By Capt. Jack Judson

[Copyright 1916 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

CHAPTER I

"IT'S a land worth fighting for, after all Look over yon landscape. How beautiful it lies in the full moonlight. I say, Gordon, if I were not in the service of King George, I'd settle down here and spend the rest of my days amid these surroundings."

The speaker was one of two horsemen who had just ridden to the top of a hill which overlooked the valley of the Peedee in South Carolina

It was in the days of Marion and Greene, when those two patriots were resisting the aggressions of the British troops during the War of Independence.

Gordon, who was one of Colonel Tarleton's famous dragoons, looked at his companion, Major Tilton, and smiled.

"I see one thing," said he. "Before we conquer South Carolina we must subdue the women as well as the men."

"And the pesky boys, too," was the reply. "These little Rebels fight like old ones, and more than once they have caused us to lose an engagement."

"You are right, Major. As you know, I carry a bullet from Black Horse Ben's pistol in my arm."

"I fancy you would like to catch that young rapscallion?"

"Wouldn't I?"

"You will have to keep your eyes open if you ever do," smiled Tilton. "Why, Black Horse Ben wouldn't hesitate to shoot Tarleton himself."

"Of course he wouldn't. He's the slipperiest chap I ever had the hunting of"

By this time the two officers had seen enough of the valley in the moonlight, and turning, rode down the hill.

"I think we will make an effort to surprise General Greene next," Tilton remarked, "tho I fear he will have his eyes open watching for us."

"That he will. We have tried to catch him nodding more than once, and always have failed."

Major Tilton did not reply to these last remarks, but suddenly put spurs to his horse, and the next moment the twain were galloping away.

At almost the same hour a stout boy who rode a black horse drew rein not far from the foot of the hill. A house stood at the meeting of two roads, and there was a dim light in one window.

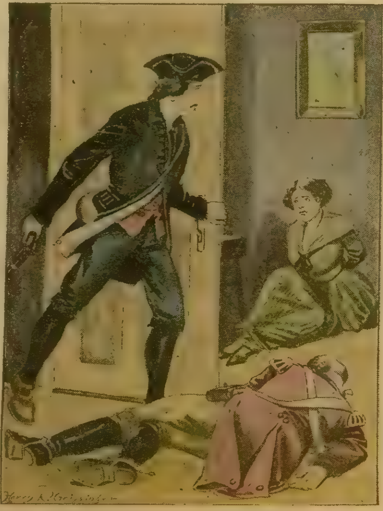
Still holding the bridle, the boy rapped at the door which was opened by a man of 60, who stared at his visitor with distended eyes

"What's the matter now?" he growled

"Nothing very much, Master Dill," replied the youth

"Something will be the matter one of these days if you don't quit poking round these parts."

"You don't say?" grinned the youth, who was known as Black Horse Ben in the region roundabout.



The door flew open and in sprang Black Horse Ben.

"I do say it," was the emphatic reply "Don't you know they've posted you?"

"I do, Master Dill, for I've read the notices with a good deal of pleasure."

"They've got the rope ready for your neck right now."

"Maybe they have, but I don't feel it pulling much yet."

"Well, what brings you to my house this time o' night?" queried Dill, who was classed as a Tory by the patriots. "You know I'm neutral in this war."

"That's what you claim to be," was the reply. "I just thought I would stop a moment and ask you if you've seen anything of Tarleton's redcoats in this vicinity."

"I've got other work to do than looking for redcoats," was the snappy reply.

"But you've got eyes, Master Dill, persisted the boy. "You get abroad at times——"

"But not to poke my head into a noose," was the interruption.

Black Horse Ben had one foot on the doorstep, when he suddenly exclaimed:

"That's a pretty pistol on the table there! Where did you get it, Master Dill?"

The man's face went white

"It looks like a British pistol," continued the boy. "Somebody has been making you a present, I think."

"Well if they have I'm sure it can be none of your business."

"Maybe not, but I wonder what General Greene would say if he knew that Master Nathan Dill had a British pistol in his possession."

"You may convey the intelligence to him if you want to," was the answer. "But see that you tell him the truth, and that is that I found the weapon on the road last week, lost by some trooper, I reckon."

"Oh, that's how you got it," remarked the boy, but his face showed that he did not believe one word of the explanation.

"Well, good night, Master Dill. See that that weapon does no harm to the cause of liberty."

Dill, with a half-suppressed oath, slammed the door in the boy's face and went back to his chair. In another moment Ben had mounted his black horse and was riding hard down the road in the moonlight.

"Nat Dill can lie like a pirate," he was saying to himself. "I wonder if he expected me to believe that story about the pistol? It was given him by one of Tarleton's men and perhaps by Bloody Tarleton himself. I'll keep an eye on Dill hereafter," and with this he turned into another road and soon reached a house which was dark and ghostlike.

This time he did not knock, but opened the door and entered the gloomy interior.

"Who comes?" asked a voice in the gloom.

"It is Ben," replied the boy, and guided by the sound of the voice, he advanced and found a hand which had been thrust out for him

"What's the news?" asked the unseen person, who reclined on a cot

"The most important news is that they're going to surprise General Greene."

"The deuce they are!" was the response. "Well, they'll find the General prepared for them."

"I hope so. I'll see that Greene is warned."

"You must, boy. He must not fall into the hands of the enemy."

There was a moment's silence, and then Ben said: "When will you be out again?"

"I'm ready to go now. The little scratch has healed, and if my horse were [illegible]——"

"Mine will carry double," interrupted Black Horse Ben. "I've trained Comet for [illegible]."

"Then I'll go with you," was the ex[illegible] and the man [illegible] feet. "I've been in [illegible] long enough, anyhow. I [illegible] the redcoats back for what they [illegible]"

When the black horse left the place he had a double load, for the patriot Captain sat behind Ben

"You make a great lone scout," he said to his young companion

"I'm doing my best for the cause. It's pretty ticklish work at times, and I've had more than one narrow escape, but I'm going to keep up my work till the Colonies are free."

Two miles from the house, Ben turned suddenly from the road and pulled up in a dense wood

"Not a word," said he, in a whisper. "The night hawks are abroad."

A minute later the sound of hoofs was distinctly heard. Presently a lot of riders came abreast of the hiding-place, laughing and joking in rough voices. Ben and his companion watched them in silence.

"Who were they?" cautiously asked the patriot Captain.

"Twenty-two of Carleton's men," was the reply. "They are on some dastardly raid now, perhaps to burn some poor widow out."

"The dastards!" was the hissed rejoinder.

When the sounds had ceased, Black Horse Ben rode back into the winding country way and pursued the journey.

"Look yonder!" abruptly cried the young partisan, pointing ahead. "See that horseman on yon hill outlined in the moon as it were?"

"I see him. 'Tis a sentinel of some sort."

"I'm going to see what it means," exclaimed Ben. "You and Comet wait for me here."

"You're not going to tackle the fellow?" cried the Captain. "He may have fifty comrades around him."

"That's what I want to know," was the reply. "I caught a fellow just like him a month ago," and with this Black Horse Ben vanished from the patriot's eyes.

The boy knew every foot of the ground in that particular region. He had traversed it times without number in pursuit of his dangerous calling, and he was not to be deceived.

As he crept toward the hill upon which the strange horse stood, he drew a pistol from his belt and deliberately cocked it. He advanced to within a few feet of the solitary horseman. The apparition was a British trooper.

For a few moments Ben regarded him in silence, and then springing forward

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he thrust the weapon almost into the man's face.

"You're my prisoner! Surrender or die!" cried the young scout.

CHAPTER II.

AS THE man in the saddle, who was a British vedette, looked down at the boy, he laid his hand on his pistol, but Ben's voice sounded again in his ear.

"None o' that, sir!" said the young patriot. "Take your hand from your weapon, or there'll be a dead dragoon on this hill."

"Who are you?" growled the cavalryman.

"Never mind that. This is no time for explanation, but if you must know, I am called Black Horse Ben."

"I thought so."

"Dismount and come with me," resumed Ben. "You can lead your horse. My companion is not far away."

"Seems to me you're pretty terse."

The boy's answer was a smile.

With very ill grace the dragoon sprang to the ground, and Ben successfully guided him to where he had left Comet and the patriot Captain.

"I got him," smiled the boy, as they came up. "It wasn't much trouble, after all, for my prisoner here obeyed like a gentleman."

In a little while Ben and the Captain were well mounted, and the prisoner, whose hands were bound on his back, was compelled to walk between the horses.

"Whither are you taking me?" he asked.

"Your question will be answered later on," replied Ben.

"Well, all I have to say is that you are a rascally fellow," the dragoon snarled.

"That's a compliment, Ben," laughed the Captain.

"It's not the first one of the kind I've received. We don't mince names during war times."

For two hours the trio pursued their way, now keeping to the well-defined roads which were visible in the moonlight, and now cutting across fields where there were no obstacles. At last they drew up in front of a large house far more pretentious than its neighbors. The prisoner started.

Ben shouted, and a woman appeared on the porch.

"Is that you, Ben," she asked, straining her eyes to see all that presented itself.

"It's no one else, Mistress Hagan. I've brought you a guest."

"A what?" cried the portly woman, coming forward. "By my life, Ben, you've caught one of Tarleton's men."

"Yes, and he's quite docile by now," with a laugh. "Can you entertain him for, say, an hour?"

"Yes, if he's secured."

"Oh, we're not going to turn him loose in your house, you may be sure of that."

In less than ten minutes the captured dragoon was seated in a heavy chair to which he had been fastened with heavy ropes.

"I'll be back within an hour," Ben said, addressing the woman. "The prisoner can make himself at home, and you can do a little watching outside."

"That I will do," was the response. "I'll see that he doesn't get away."

Black Horse Ben had private reasons for not taking his captive direct to the nearest American camp, where he was to deliver a report, and he was certain that Mrs. Hagan would take care of the dragoon.

Three miles from the house was a small camp of Americans connected with General Greene's army, and Ben and the Captain were soon challenged by the outposts. As Black Horse Ben was known everywhere, he was passed thru the lines, and presently stood face to face with the Colonel in command.

"I'll send a guard after your prisoner," the officer said. "First, however, I will have to send a dispatch to General Green who is farther up the river."

"A guard is not necessary, Colonel," Ben replied. "I'll ride back and bring in the prisoner myself."

"Do you think you can do that?"

"None of them have escaped from my hands yet," was the proud reply. "I'll go right back and fetch him in."

Meantime there was something doing at Mrs. Hagan's house. The surly dragoon for some time had said nothing. He had not relished the situation from the first, and it went against the grain to be lashed to a chair and watched by a woman.

"We dragoons are not as black as we are painted," said he, in modulated tones.

Nancy Hagan did not reply.

"By the way," he went on, several minutes later, "that boy pulled the cords terribly tight, and I'm suffering."

"I guess he wanted to make sure of you," was the answer. "I dare not help you any."

"You're merciless, too, I see."

"I'm only obeying orders."

The big dragoon lapsed into silence, but he bit his lip till it bled.

"You're likely to have some callers," he remarked, when he spoke again. "I hear your dogs."

Mrs. Hagan went to the window and looked out. Seeing no one, she cautiously opened the door and stepped out upon the porch.

No sooner had she closed the door a trifle, when the man in the chair got upon his feet and flung himself backward against the wall, crashing the chair into fragments. For a moment he was entangled in the ropes, but he jerked himself loose, and as Mrs. Hagan rushed into the room he hurled himself upon her and threw her across the floor.

"You Rebels can't hold Jed Simpson long!" he cried, his face crimson. "I'll show this Black Horse Ben a noose before he's many days older."

The stunned woman could only stare at the dragoon, who seemed ready to finish his work by beating her brains out.

"The boy said he would be back in an hour, didn't he?" he roared. "Well, I'll just wait for him."

His next act was to bind Mrs. Hagan and toss her into one corner.

"You see I've turned the tables," he grinned viciously. "I am a man of tricks, and this is only one of a thousand."

He searched the room and found in a cupboard a brace of pistols already primed, and these he seized upon with the greatest zeal.

"Rebel pistols for Rebel hearts!" Mrs. Hagan heard him say, with the air of a demon. "Now I'll shade the window a little, and when that young Rebel comes back there'll be something doing here."

The terrified woman could only look at the dragoon and see in his actions the end of Black Horse Ben. He stationed himself at a window which looked out over the porch, and held a pistol in each hand. Minutes seemed hours to both.

"Where's your husband?" suddenly asked the dragoon, turning upon his captive.

"Where he should be—with the Swamp Fox."

"Then he's not likely to interfere with my little game?"

"General Marion seems to be everywhere, as you British well know."

"But I happen to know where the Swamp Fox is tonight, and there's no danger of his coming here."

With these words he went back to his vigil at the window, and the room was silent once more.

"Here he comes," Mrs. Hagan heard him ejaculate in tones of triumph. "We'll show Black Horse Ben, as he is called, just what a redcoat can do who has been tied to a chair."

The woman's heart seemed to land in her throat, and her face went deadly white.

The curtain of the window was now more closely drawn, and the dragoon watched the door. Mrs. Hagan tried to cry out, but the warning stuck in her throat. There were footsteps on the porch, and the dragoon raised the pistols. If Black Horse Ben should open the door he would never again be a lone scout for liberty.

It was a moment of intense peril for the brave boy, and the woman saw that the late prisoner intended to show no mercy. She could see the dragoon's eyes flash and his nerves quiver with excitement.

Suddenly a loud report was heard, and the dragoon reeled from the window and pitched headlong to the floor. The following second the door flew open and in sprang Black Horse Ben.

"So the fellow bested you?" he cried to the woman on the floor. "I thought as much when I saw his shadow thru the curtain. He stood too close to the window for his own good," and Ben stared at the man lying almost at his feet.

"He was watching for me, eh?" he went on.

"Yes, for you, Ben. But thank Heaven, you haven't taken a life."

"I sought to wing him only," replied Ben. "He'll live to become General Greene's prisoner after all. I could have sent a bullet thru his head, but I don't kill my prisoners. He'll live to serve King George a little longer," and Ben turned to the man who was glaring at him like a tiger.

CHAPTER III.

IT WAS not without some difficulty that Black Horse Ben got his wounded

Ponies Given Away

On the left is "Dapple," a silky chestnut Shetland Pony, ridden by Ernest Heckert of Pennsylvania. Ernest sent us his name and we sent him "Dapple."

On the right is "Beauty", a Pony that was given to little Miss Evelyne Russell of Arkansas. Evelyne saw an advertisement like this, and sent in her name and address, and we sent her "Beauty."

At the bottom is a picture of George Edwin Adams of New York, and his beautiful black and white Pony, "Dolly." George is another of the many boys and girls who sent in their names and who was given one of our Shetland Ponies. Who will be the **next Boy or Girl** to send in his or her name for a Pony?

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We have given away 364 Shetland Ponies to children, all over America. 364 Children have been made happy, with one of these beautiful Ponies—each with buggy, harness, saddle, bridle and blanket—all sent prepaid, without a cent of cost to any child. The Outfit is easily worth $200.00.

Children! Don't miss this one great chance of your life to get a Shetland Pony. You have often wished for one. Just send your name and address, and we shall send you at once pictures of the ponies we are giving away and enter your name in our Big Free-for-all Pony Club.

Parents! If you have a boy or girl from 6 to 12 years of age, who would like to own a real Shetland Pony, send in his or her name. It can't do any harm, and your child might win one of these Ponies just as 364 children have already done.

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prisoner to the nearest American camp. He might have killed him at the window of Mrs. Hagan's house, but he did not want to be so cruel, and was satisfied in wounding him, hoping to get some valuable information from him for the cause of liberty. But he found his man morose and sullen, and his inquiries were answered with maledictions.

The dragoon had intended to put an end to the boy's career, and if he had not turned the tables on him so deftly the Colony would have been deprived of the services of freedom's lone scout.

If Ben had taken a certain road he might have made a discovery, for in the moonlight a man was nailing a notice to the bark of a huge oak. This man was not dressed in uniform, altho his clothes betokened a man in an exalted position, and despite his sixty years there was scarcely a gray hair on his head.

Everybody far and near knew Gilford Gross for one of the rankest Tories in the Colonies. He had never concealed his love for the King's cause, and on more than one occasion he had assisted the redcoated legions of Colonel Tarleton.

Gross had left his house for a purpose, and this was to nail the paper to the tree. When he had finished his task he stepped back a pace and surveyed his work.

"NOTICE.

"A reward of ten pounds will be paid for the body, living or dead, of the boy generally known in this region as Black Horse Ben. He is a traitor to His Royal Majesty, George the Third, and deserves death. Deliver the young miscreant at the nearest British camp and receive the above reward. In the name of the King."

"That'll get him if anything will," said Gross, when he had read the notice aloud. "We must get rid of this young scoundrel or maybe lose the Colony because of his unceasing vigilance. Now for home."

Thereupon Gilford mounted his horse and set off at a gallop up the road.

When he alighted in front of one of the most pretentious houses in the district he threw the reins to a slave in waiting and pushed on into an elegantly furnished room. The apartment was occupied at the time by a woman of his own age who greeted him with a look.

"We've got the boy well posted now!" exclaimed Gross, slumping down into a chair. "He won't get away this time. I tell you, Eliza, I won't have any rest till we've rid the land of Black Horse Ben."

"He's been too slick for the King's men so far, returned Gross' wife, with a smile.

"I know he has, and that's why I am on nettles all the time."

"I fear you will have to remain there, husband."

The Tory snarled.

"You do, eh?" he cried, turning full upon his wife. "I half believe the boy has your sympathy."

"He's doing what he deems best," ventured Mrs. Gross.

"Just as I thought," roared Gilford, leaping from the chair and advancing upon his wife with clinched hands. "I won't have such Rebel talk in my house. I have already discovered that Vera sympathizes with the Rebels, and I'm going to turn her out of doors."

"If you do, sir, I'll go with her," was the undaunted answer. "We have raised the girl, and she has become a part of our lives."

Gross fell back to the chair with a growl.

At this moment there were sounds of footfalls on the porch, and then human voices reached the ears of man and wife. The old Tory jerked a pistol from the table and started across the room.

Before he could reach the door it was thrown open, and three British dragoons strode into the room.

"Welcome!" exclaimed Gross. "I like to see red uniforms at any time."

The soldiers replied that they were returning from a scout, and one growled out that they had met with no success.

"I thought we might run across Black Horse Ben," he said. "We are so anxious to lay hold of that young rascal, you know, Master Gross."

"And so am I!" exclaimed the Tory. "Eliza," he went on, turning to his wife, "tell Julius to bring up some wine, and call Vera in that our guests may be served by fair hands."

With a parting glance at her husband, Mrs. Gross disappeared, and presently a slave entered carrying wine on a large platter, which he set on the round table.

"Now, where's the girl?" cried Gilford Gross, the Tory. "We must have the wine served by beauty's hands."

A moment later a door opened, and a beautiful young girl of 17 entered the room.

"Am I wanted?" she asked, looking at Gross.

"To be sure you are," was the reply. "Vera, these gallant men are our guests, and we are going to drink the King's health. All ready, now, gentlemen! Julius has filled your goblets. Take up one of them, and propose the health of King George."

The face of the slender girl went as white as ashes. She recoiled with a little cry which found no echo in the Tory's heart.

"What," he yelled, "aren't you going to propose the toast to the King?"

"I don't like to," was the reply. "I am not used to doing so, and——"

"By Heaven, you must!" interrupted Gross, stamping his foot heavily on the carpet. "I will have no disobedience in this house."

"Don't force the girl," put in the youngest of the dragoons at this juncture. "Such a toast may go against the grain with her."

"I don't care if it does!" thundered the Tory. "I won't have anything else."

"I trust you will pardon me for interfering," resumed the dragoon, who was not over 21. "You can see that the lass doesn't care for the task, and——"

"I'm master here," broke in Gross. "I know she's Rebel at heart, and I will not be crossed under my own roof. Take up the goblet, girl."

Vera and the dragoon exchanged looks, and she evidently saw friendship in his eyes, for she did not stir.

"I'll break every bone in your body if you don't go ahead!" cried the infuriated Tory, thrusting himself toward the pale-faced girl.

"You'll no nothing of the kind," put in the young dragoon, gripping Gross' arm and looking him sternly in the face. "You touch the lass at your peril, you miserable wretch."

"But she's Rebel," stammered the Tory.

"She's got a right to her sentiments, much as we may not like them. I serve the King, but we dragoons can be gentlemen as well as soldiers."

"By Jove! I believe you're half Rebel," grunted Gross, as he tottered back to his seat.

"Think what you please," laughed the soldier. "I will propose the King's health, and the young miss need not drink it if she doesn't like to."

As the dragoons raised their glasses above their heads the girl's defender proposed the toast which was drunk with considerable merriment, and to the surprise of all Vera touched her lips to the rim of her goblet, but with a look of thanks to the young soldier.

"We're going now," he said, turning to Gilford Gross. "Mind you, sir, treat the lass decent, or you will hear from Ormont DeKay in the future."

Vera followed the men to the porch where their horses were and took the hand which young DeKay extended.

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart," said she, looking into his face.

"Never mind that," was the reply, as the cheeks of the young dragoon reddened. "Everything goes in war. I don't care if you are Rebel. You shall never be insulted in my presence. Now we are going out to look for Black Horse Ben. I fancy that you do not wish us success."

Color came and went on Vera's face.

"To be just with you," said she," it is my hope that you will not find the boy."

"I thought as much," was the laughing answer. "Well, I promise you, miss, that Ormont DeKay will not look very hard for the young pest," and with this he doffed his hat and mounted his horse.

When the girl re-entered the house she found Gross' chair vacant and the Tory's wife standing in the middle of the room.

"Husband has gone away," said the woman. "He declares that he will not return till they have captured Black Horse Ben and strung him up."

"Then he may never come back," replied Vera, as she went to her room with a little smile lingering at her lips.

This story, developing very thrilling happenings, will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

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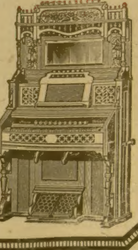

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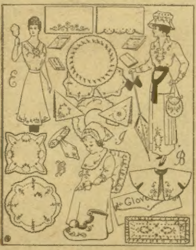
The Blade and Ledger together $1.50 a year (52 issues); 6 months for 75 cents; 4 months 50 cents.



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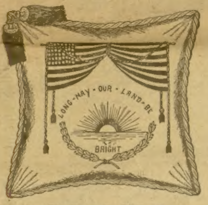
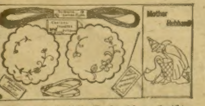
NO. 520, STAMPING OUTFIT.—Just consider how much an outfit like this would cost if you were to buy it from any fancy work store. Every lady will appreciate this offer. It consists of 5 large sheets of perforated patterns of the following designs: Linen suits, corset covers, shirtwaist, dresses, baby bib, baby cap, centerpieces, collars and cuffs and many others. Sent with a year's subscription to either the Blade or the Ledger for $1.00.


LONG MAY OUR LAND BE BRIGHT

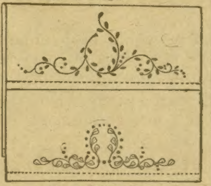
No. 1511, Patriotic Pillow Top.

NO. 1511, PATRIOTIC PILLOW TOP.—Show your colors, let every one know that you are proud of the fact that you live in the land of the free and home of the brave. At this time when history is being made and the map of the other half of the world is being changed is the time to show your loyalty to the American flag. The design is tinted in artistic colors on tan ticking 21x21 inches· included is a tan holland linene back. The pillow will be sent to any one sending us $1.00 for a new or renewal subscription to either the Blade or the Ledger for a year.



No. 1025, Child's Embroidery Outfit.

NO. 1025, CHILD'S EMBROIDERY OUTFIT.—With this complete and practical embroidery outfit for children the little ones will pass many pleasant hours learning to embroider "just like mamma does." It consists of: One pair of embroidery hoops, one embroidery needle, one skein of mercerized cotton, one stamped piece for outline embroidery, four stamped doilies, one sheet of comical transfer patterns, one instruction sheet, and an 8-page embroidery booklet. All sent prepaid for a year's subscription, new or renewal, at $1.00, to the Blade or Ledger.



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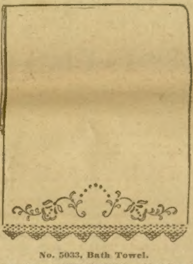
NO. 34, PILLOW CASES.—The pillow cases are already made up and hemstitched, from good quality white muslin; size 24x36. One pair, any one design, sent for a $2.00 subscription, new or renewal, to the Blade and the Ledger.



No. 5033, Bath Towel.

NO. 5033, BATH TOWEL.—Nothing is prettier than a fancy embroidered and crocheted bath towel. The design is stamped on a superior quality of absorbent crash, better than Turkish toweling, and it measures 18x38 inches. With each stamped towel, we include two skeins of white floss for embroidering; one ball of fast color blue crocheting cotton; three crochet needles, and one set of initial transfers (four different styles). This complete set will be sent for $2.00 in subscriptions, new or renewal, to The Saturday Blade or the Chicago Ledger.

* * *

In the Future.

The ballroom was crowded. The girls' dark dress suits, with their gleaming white shirt fronts, made a pleasing background for the men's many-colored and graceful costumes. What strong, handsome girls, and what a glorious bunch of blushing, appealing masculinity. With what gallant eagerness each girl rushed forward to claim her partner.

The couple of the evening was Little Willie Small and his escort—big, strong, powerful Betty Lipscomb, a fine picture of protecting womanhood! And well might any girl be proud to win for herself such a charming, pretty little husband as Little Willie.

Betty's heart missed a beat as she gazed down upon his delicate head, resting so trustfully against her broad shoulder as they hopped thru the breathless measures of the horse trot. She felt that at all costs she must learn her fate that night. Little Willie knew, also, that the time had come when he could no longer avoid yielding to the masterful love of this most attractive woman, and his little heart beat wildly in anticipation of the great moment.

At the end of the dance, Betty, with sudden determination, led her blushing partner to a secluded corner well hidden behind a thick screen of growing plants. Little Willie sank into a chair and picked up his little ivory-handled fan, which dangled by a silk cord from his wrist. Drawing a chair up close to his, Betty took the fan from him gently and began to wield it nervously. Little Willie's delicate, blue-veined hands toyed absently with the huge bunch of roses at his waist as he exclaimed, in a soft, bell-like voice, which thrilled Betty to the depths of her being:

"What a heavenly dance!"

Little Willie leaned close to her as he asked, in an aggrieved little voice:

"Don't you think so, too, Betty?"

What girl could have withstood the liquid innocence of his pale blue eyes and the childish curve of his tempting red lips? Certainly not Betty Lipscomb. The fan dropped unheeded from her hand as she drew Little Willie to her, exclaiming, brokenly:

"Oh, my darling, could we but dance thru life together always! Little Willie, I love you—love you! Will you marry me?"

Gently she turned his beautiful little face toward her with her firm, large hand and fervently sought her answer in his eyes. With a delicious sigh of complete surrender, Little Willie yielded to her his lips.

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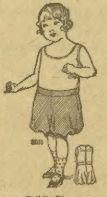
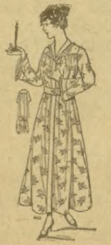
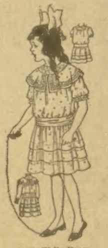


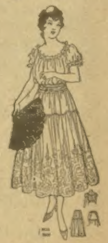
9030 Child's Bloomers, 2, 4 and 6 years.



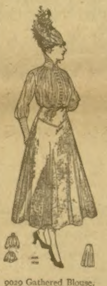
9023 Kimono with Yoke. Small 34 or 36, Medium 38 or 40, Large 42 or 44 bust.



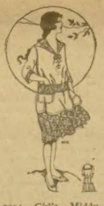
9697 Girl's Dress, 6 to 12 years.



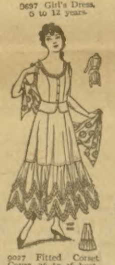
8634 Gathered Blouse for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.
8900 Gathered Skirt for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



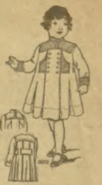
9029 Gathered Blouse, 34 to 42 bust.
9025 Three-Piece Skirt, 24 to 32 waist.



9014 Girl's Middy Dress, 8 to 14 years.



9027 Fitted Corset Cover, 36 to 46 bust.
9051 Four-Piece Petticoat, 24 to 34 waist.



8893 Child's Dress, 2, 4 or 6 years.

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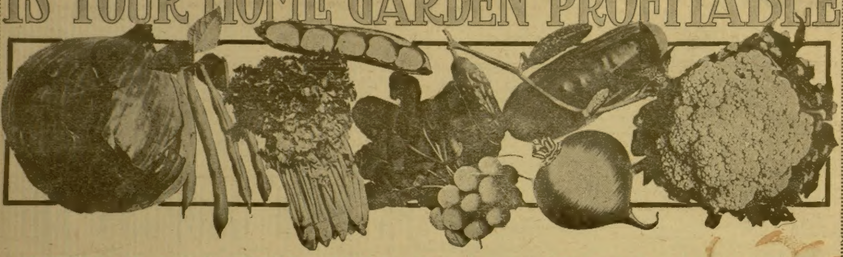

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